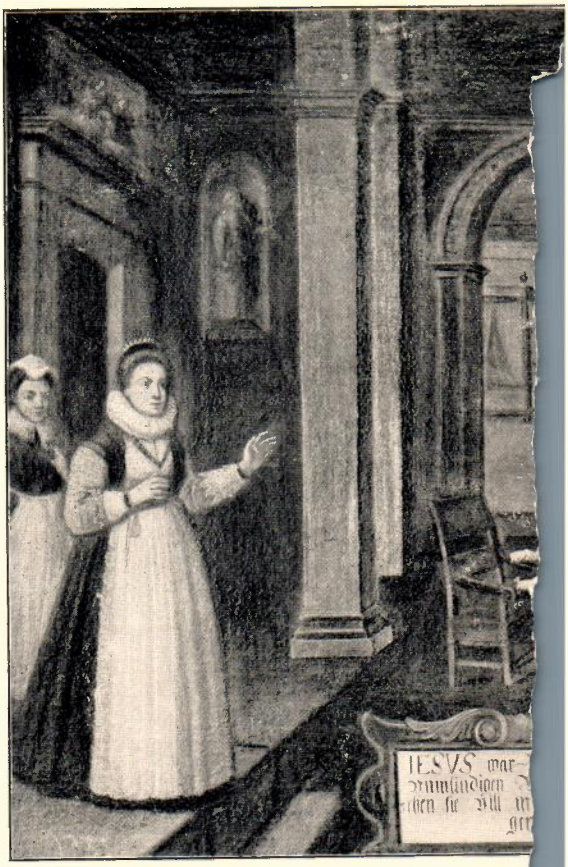

"JESUS WAS THE

MARY WARD:

A FOUNDRESS OF THE 17TH CENTURY.

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BY

MOTHER M. SALOME,

Of the Bar Convent, York.

With an Introduction by the Bishop of Newport.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following Life of Mary Ward is not a mere abridgment of the "Life" which appeared some fifteen or twenty years ago, in two volumes, under the editorship of the late Father Coleridge, S.J. It is an original work for popular use, by one who venerates Mary Ward as a Mother in religion, and is a member of that Community of her children which for two hundred years or thereabouts was the only House of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin in the British Empire.

The career and adventures of Mary Ward (1585—1645) cover sixty years of a period that was full of vicissitudes and contrasts. Her story brings before us the England of that day, with its cruel religious persecutions and its terrible civil war; the noble confessions of the Catholic gentry; the heroic lives of the hunted priests; the sufferings and anxieties of families. We see the passive resistance of a Catholicism that is being slowly but surely stabbed to death. Here and there, as in the reign of Charles I., the hand of the Government seems to relax, and there are hopes, and the starting of new enterprises. But then comes the great rebellion, and the Catholic cause sinks never to rise again. We see persecuted and despairing Catholics fleeing across the seas to France, to the Low Countries, and to Spain. We read of the efforts made to keep English Catholicism alive, by seminaries, colleges, and nunneries, founded in lands where the Catholic faith was still paramount, but where Catholics were not always sympathetic. We read of the France of Henri IV. and Louis XIII., and think of St. Francis of Sales and St. Vincent de Paul; we picture to ourselves the ceaseless tramp of the soldier in all the fairest provinces of Europe, from the Alps to the Atlantic

Ocean. In following the fortunes of this illustrious Englishwoman, we pass from York to London, from London to Spanish Flanders, to Munich, to Vienna, and on to Rome. It was the Rome of Gregory XV. and of Urban VIII. There is hardly a trait in this picture which in some way or other does not add a touch of darkness or of passing brightness to the history of Mary Ward.

She who was the real pioneer of all the active Orders of religious women, and who, before her vocation could be fulfilled, had to suffer the persecution of English law and to taste of the prisons of the Inquisition, was a Yorkshire woman, connected by blood and friendship with the Babthorpes, the Wrights, the Talbots, the Poyntzes, the Wigmores, the Rookwoods, and a score of great Yorkshire families. The place where she was born, Mulwith Manor, near Ripon, is still pointed out; so are Hutton Rudby, near Osmotherley, where she lived for a time; Heworth, where she died, and the little churchyard of Osbaldwick, where she was buried. The records which remain show her to us, in her youth, as a beautiful, spirited, and religious girl, visiting, making friends, and being sought in marriage, like others of her station—with the shadow of fines, forfeitures, and death always hovering near. Then we follow her to the continent, and see her gradually making out what it is that God's will requires —giving herself to the poor, making essays in forming Sisterhoods, then coming under the influence of St. Ignatius and resolving to gather together a Community vowed to obedience such as the Society vows, to poverty and chastity, and dedicated to the education of girls. How she succeeded, how many trials befell her, and how the Holy See suppressed her Institute, we read in this Life; as also how, when she was dead and gone, the Holy See solemnly authorised and approved a Congregation which was morally, even if not legally, continuous with hers.

It would be of no utility to the general Catholic

reader to enter into certain points of controversy, which are still undecided, in regard to the story of Mary Ward's life. What sort of an Order or Institute it was her original intention to establish, it is impossible to say with precision. There can be no doubt that, at St. Omer, in the days of her youth and ardour, she was deeply struck with the organisation of the Society of Jesus, and that she dreamed of a Congregation of women who should reproduce, as far as women could do so, the chief features of the Society. They were to be under no Bishop, but governed by a general Mother-Superior, who should be subject to the Holy See alone. They were to take up the education of girls ; they were to pass freely from one House to another, and even to enter families (so it would seem) for the advantage of the Faith ; and their very dress was to be not unlike that of a Jesuit. These projects and aspirations were finally, by time and experience, reduced to two—the absence of enclosure, as understood in the strict Tridentine sense, and the government by a Mother-General. Mary Ward, who never wavered in her adhesion to these two conditions, met with an opposition on the part of ecclesiastical authority which she found it impossible to overcome. It was not that the existence of Nuns without enclosure was, even at that time, absolutely without example in the Church. In Belgium, for example, no monasteries of women, older than the date of the Tridentine Canons, had ever been placed under the Tridentine enclosure, except the Poor Clares. Moreover, both in the North of Europe and in the South there were institutes, sodalities, or companies of women, such as the Béguines of Flanders and the *Monache di Casa* of Naples, who either lived in some kind of community or in private houses, and wore a distinctive habit. But Mary Ward contemplated something beyond a mere local Sodality or Confraternity. We possess a writing of Suarez, in which he gives a well-considered opinion on what was already beginning to be called the " Institute

of the English Virgins." This was written in June, 1615. Up to this date Mary Ward had resided chiefly at St. Omer, under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers and the protection of Bishop Blaise. She had tried her vocation in the Convent of Poor Clares which she herself had founded in that town. Finally, after much prayer and trouble of mind, she had gathered together six or eight ladies and formed a Community at St. Omer, with the object of imitating, as far as possible, the Society of Jesus. The Community grew and prospered; they opened schools for rich and poor, and made no secret of their determination to imitate the Society—somewhat, it must be added, to the embarrassment of the Fathers, who were very shy, officially, of their would-be Sisters. In 1614 Mary and one or two of her Nuns seem to have paid a visit to London, where they took a house in Spitalfields, and, whilst living a holy, regular, and ascetical life, went freely out among seculars and into the prisons, sometimes in disguise. It was at this moment that Suarez, who was then at Coimbra, was asked to give an opinion whether the Institute was pious and laudable, and whether a Bishop had the power to approve and confirm it. His opinion was that, as this was a question of a new "Religious Order," it could not exist as a Diocesan Institution, but must either be approved by the Holy See or cease to pretend to the religious state. But I am not here concerned with this view of the great Jesuit doctor. It was not generally accepted even in his own day; and in modern times it has come to be universally held that Congregations sanctioned by Episcopal authority may be true religious bodies, whatever differences the approbation of the Holy See may make in their status and position. What is interesting is to read some of the secondary reasons put down by Suarez as rendering it prudent and necessary that the Holy See itself, and no local Bishop only, should take cognisance of such an enterprise as that of Mary Ward. In the first place, arguing from the written

report which had been laid before him, and which undoubtedly described the mode of life of Mary Ward's first Community at St. Omer, he points out that in intention and in externals they were undistinguishable from real Religious. They made the three essential vows, and those vows, though not "solemn," were perpetual as far as the Sisters were concerned. They lived together like a religious community. He was not told whether they had any special habit, but that circumstance, he observes, was not important—and in all probability they did add some distinguishing detail to an ordinary dress. They professed to be Religious, therefore, and, that being so, there were special reasons why they should be examined by the Holy See. For, first, they neither vowed nor practised the very important point of enclosure. Now the Holy See had always, in latter times, been rigid on the subject of enclosure for religious women. He did not, certainly, maintain that this new Institute might not possibly show good reason for the non-observance of strict enclosure—but it was without doubt a matter to be submitted to Rome. Moreover, it appeared that these English Sisters alleged that it was essential for them to have the liberty, when they considered it needful, to travel to and fro in England—*discurrere per Angliam.* This was a very dangerous claim, and no authority but the highest could rightly judge whether it was expedient to grant it, or how it was to be regulated if granted. Finally, the report stated that the Institute was expressly ordained and directed towards the salvation of souls; and it was a subject of serious consideration whether such a purpose could be approved of in the case of women; it seemed to be both against the Scripture and the Canon law, and should by no means be sanctioned without consultation with the Holy See.

We have, in this paper of Suarez, what seems to be a genuine account of Mary Ward's intentions. She worked strenuously for many years, after 1616, in founding fresh Houses of the Institute under diocesan

authority, and in endeavouring to obtain the approval of the Holy See. She established Communities at Liege, Cologne, Treves, Munich, Vienna, Presburg, Prague, Naples, and Rome itself. These were founded between 1616 and 1628—a space of twelve years. It was in the year 1621 that she made her first journey to Rome, and appeared before Pope Gregory XV. to plead for her Institute. She was received with great kindness in Rome, and was allowed to establish a House in which her views and practices might be studied and considered by those in authority. There is still extant a very interesting letter of Gregory XV. addressed to the Infanta Isabella, Archduchess of Belgium, dated February 12th, 1622, in which the Pope highly commends her piety, her zeal, and her labours on behalf of her unhappy country, and states that he has given orders for her petitions to be carefully considered, and her Institute examined. Nine years later (1630), Urban VIII. suppressed the Institute, and a month after that Mary Ward was subjected to a mild imprisonment at Munich, which lasted for seven or eight weeks. It seems to have been understood on all hands that Mary herself was a Saint. But people in authority were justly alarmed at the possibilities latent in some of her plans. She was allowed to come to Rome, and live in community with her own Nuns, and she remained there till 1637. In the Rhineland and in Bavaria her monasteries continued to exist, though cut off from her authority. In 1685 the well-known Nunnery at York was founded, from Munich ; it still stands on the spot outside the ancient walls where it was first established, and, as this very interesting book is sufficient to prove, continues to flourish. In 1703 Pope Clement XI. gave the Apostolic approbation to the "Institute of the English Virgins," as then existing in Austria and other parts ; and in 1877 Pope Pius IX. bestowed upon it, after a revision of its Constitutions, the ample confirmation under which it now lives and works. The original aspirations of Mary Ward have not all been realised.

The Communities, though not strictly enclosed, yet if compared with a score of modern "Congregations" may be said to be cloistered. There is no Mother Superior-General. Some of the Provinces of the Institute are united under a Superior, as in Austria and in Bavaria. In Ireland the Congregation is known as the Sisters of Loreto, and its numerous Houses are under the jurisdiction of a Mother-Superior, who resides in the splendid Convent of Rathfarnham. The Houses in India and elsewhere are subject, some to Bavaria (Nymphenburg) and others to Rathfarnham. The work of the Institute has come to be, I think I may say exclusively, the education of girls.

Mary Ward was a great Englishwoman. In her character were combined that loftiness of ideal, with strenuous energy and excellent common sense, which have distinguished the most eminent men and women of the race. She was, moreover, a contemplative, and had come under the spell of that seventeenth century mysticism of which we have Catholic and English examples in Baker and Southwell. A life of prayer, self-denial, and religious discipline sanctified her naturally proud and gallant spirit, and in her trials she never failed in obedience or docility. I cannot imagine any story more interesting, more touching, more stimulating, to Catholic girls of the present day than that which is told in these pages of the noble way in which a daughter of England's old Faith and ancient blood rose to meet the storm and the danger of her times, and, whilst giving her whole heart to God, dedicated her life to her Faith and her country.

MARY WARD.

CHAPTER I.

"They have called the people happy that hath these things ; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord." —*Ps.* cxliii. 15.

OUR story takes us back to Queen Elizabeth's reign—about three hundred years ago. To this remote period some of our readers may find it difficult to transport themselves at a moment's notice. And small wonder if they do. For the sixteenth century is removed from the nineteenth not only in time, but in thought, in politics, in ways and customs. A few pages of history, therefore, as helps to recall forgotten facts, may not come amiss.

We read that England was prosperous. Elizabeth's thirty years' rule had helped to make it so. "Men began to trade, farm, and build with renewed vigour ; a great breadth of forest land was reclaimed ; travellers went forth to discover islands far away, and to open new outlets of commerce. Wealth poured into the kingdom, and . . . prosperity was the result."

England was merry, or so it was called. Its Court was the most gorgeous in Europe; for Elizabeth, a true Tudor, loved splendour; and, as old age crept on, she loved it more. We have all read of her extravagant wardrobe, with its three thousand dresses and eighty wigs; the fabulous value of her jewels, some of them the spoils of the pirate Drake; of her dazzling progresses through the kingdom, and the magnificent entertainments of her courtiers.

The people also had their merrymaking:* there were Christmas mummings and May games, and masks and pageants of all kinds; there was bear-baiting and bull-baiting—pastimes, by the way, which were not confined to the vulgar (Elizabeth and her successor were both to be found amongst the delighted spectators of the pit); there was dancing on the green and feasting in the hall. Shakespeare, a rising poet, writes:

> Good grows with her;
> In her days every man shall eat in safety
> Under his own vine what he plants, and sing
> The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.

So England was said to be merry. But was it so in reality? This question takes us back another fifty years.

Henry VIII. was reigning then. He had revolted from the Holy See, and, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, had declared himself "the only supreme Head on earth of the English Church." Henceforth it was for him to re-make and change and add to the creed of the people according to his

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* See Chambers' "Pictorial History of England."

pleasure. It was for him to define religious truth and error, to punish the heretic and reward the orthodox. All who refused the Oath of Supremacy were held to be traitors, and were liable to be executed as traitors.

Nor was Henry yet content. He "robbed and spoiled the Church of her glory and splendour." No less than 10,000* monks and nuns he turned out of house and home; he dissolved their monasteries and convents, and poured their revenues into the royal coffers.

The King died; but he left the traces of his wickedness behind him, as a snail leaves a track of slime. The "Reform" proceeded. In the reign of his boy son, ministers were found to carry on the odious work. Deeper and deeper England sank in heresy. Calvinist teachers, with John Knox at their head, were licensed to preach; and, for the better distribution of false doctrine, the country was divided into six circuits, to each of which certain ecclesiastics or laymen were appointed "visitors."† Cathedrals were desecrated, the sanctuary lamps extinguished; the Divine Presence was gone; the Mass was abolished. The sacred vessels, rich vestments, silver shrines, were sold—there was no use for them. The statues were smashed, the altars broken, and the carpenter nailed a few planks together for a table. The rich-jewelled covers of the useless missals were bartered away, the illuminated parchment sold for waste paper. The Book of Common Prayer took their place. The religion of England, 900 years old, was almost uprooted, and the religion

* W. Smith's "English Church History." † *Ibid.*

of Calvin was offered to the wretched people in its stead.

After a lull in the storm, Elizabeth came to the throne. "*Good grows with her*," Shakespeare wrote. Let us see.

The preposterous title of "Head of the Church," though dropped from the royal title,* survived in the Oath of Supremacy. This oath, declaring Elizabeth to be the "*only supreme governor . . . in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things and causes*" (1 Eliz., cap. i.), was tendered to clergy and laity alike, and because the bishops and priests were faithful to God they were imprisoned, and their places filled by ecclesiastics of Elizabeth's own make. Tinkers, weavers, card-makers, gaolers, were installed in the sanctuary, and preached from the pulpit. The Thirty-nine Articles were drawn up as an exposition of the new creed of the now "National Church." In many places religious service was attended as a "Christmas game," and often "ended in a free fight." And yet Wordsworth, that sober poet, writes:

> And faith and hope are in their prime
> In great Eliza's golden time.
> ("White Doe of Rylstone.")

Penal laws of awful severity were passed. It was treason to refuse to take the Oath of Supremacy to the sovereign, to teach or preach the supremacy of the Pope. To bring into England any Bull or writing from the Holy Father was treason; treason to reconcile a Protestant, treason to be reconciled; death to receive absolution from a priest, to harbour or give him a drink, to persuade

* Green's "History of the English People," p. 370.

any to the Catholic faith. In twenty years of Elizabeth's reign 200 priests were executed, and a far greater number perished in the filthy prisons. Of many of these prisons a description has come down to us.

The "Little Ease" at York was full of toads and serpents; another prison was a tower in a stone wall. The ground was moist, and in it vermin bred. "Thrust down in a low vault at Hull, by reason of cold and noisome vapour and damp, one man lost his senses and died."* One cell in the tower had so small a window that it scarcely admitted light enough to read; and the air was foul, the smell pestilent.

In all the gaols the prisoners paid for the place they occupied as for lodgings. This was a means of gain to the gaoler: he crammed as many as he could into each small cell, and exacted from each prisoner the price of the whole apartment. For food the prisoners had to pay according to their rank, and for every mouthful they were at the mercy of their keepers. Many died of sheer starvation, some were reduced to skeletons, some, when released, never recovered the use of their limbs. And worse—far worse—might be told.

Did good grow with her?

This is the picture that a closer look into the history of the times gives us, and this is the answer to our question, Was England merry? But we must look forward as well as back—forward for sixty years.

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* "Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers," by Father J. Morris, S.J.

Old and decrepit, miserable and lonely, Queen Elizabeth died. James I. succeeded, but no relief came to the poor Catholics. All the penal laws already passed were confirmed in the first year of his reign, and cruel additions were made. Two years later, in open Council, James exhorted all to seek out and punish Catholics; "for all Catholics are traitors; . . . no one could be a Catholic and a loyal subject," he said—a speech worthy of the "learnedest fool in Christendom." And so priest-hunting became a lucrative profession, and priest-hunters officers of state, and the "search" a legal and much-commended practice.

It was these searches that harassed the Catholics perhaps more than any other method of persecution. The houses of both rich and poor were liable to be broken into any hour of day and night without a moment's warning. The following is a graphic description of one of these searches:

". . . the searchers wrought diligently, knocking and sounding every wall and floor under their feet. They broke and beat down, without scruple, walls, ceilings, floors, hearths of chimnies (. . . a great spite they had about chimnies, and kept much ado about them), boards—yea, they untiled the house, and, breaking down all within the chambers, they tossed and trod under their feet our clothes and bedding, the lime, plaster, dust, and dirt falling upon it, and made their common way over all without sparing. They found great store of books and church stuff also, as chalice and cruets of silver, crosses of silver gilt, with relics, pictures, ante-pendiums, borders, and all other furniture belonging unto the altar, which had been sent and bestowed upon us by former prisoners and good benefactors.

And now, alas! they have harried us of all; yea, many of us have not left so much as a prayer-book or a piece or part of one; for all was fish that came to their net; . . . the very money the poor men had to live upon they snatched away most greedily.

"After these 'gentlemen' searchers there followed hungry rascals, who licked up their leavings, sparing neither silver spoons nor other like jewels, neither linen nor woollen, as stockings of hose, remnants of cloth, kerchiefs, coifs, patlets (ruffs), shirtbands, napkins, gloves, garters, combs, knives, or anything else that could be handsomely carried away."*

Such were some of the laws passed by the first three supreme Heads of the English Church, and such were some of the results. At first sight, perhaps, we might be inclined to think that only one portion of the English people — faithful Catholics—were affected by them, and that the great bulk of the nation escaped unharmed. But on looking closer we find this was not the case. Morally and socially they affected the whole nation, the persecutors no less than their victims. For the penal laws sowed hatred and discord in families, fostered cringing apostates, rewarded hypocrites, tempted husbands to denounce their wives, and children their parents; they enriched renegade younger brothers with the spoils of their elders, and put within the reach of all the goods of those whose "recusancy" they chose to denounce. They called into being the brood of spies and catchpoles

*Father Richard Holtby's narrative, "Troubles," Series III., p. 161.

and priest-hunters—human beings whose lives were spent in tracking down their fellow-men for the crime of being faithful to God.

Socially, the harm done was not less extensive. The poor were made homeless; 72,000 robbers, thieves, and vagabonds were hanged in Henry VIII.'s reign alone, and in Elizabeth's there came to the gallows between 300 and 400 a year.*

This is a sad account of "Merry England." But, thank God, there is a glorious record to set beside it. Persecution, like temptation, perfects virtues of all kind, and we have wonderful instances of constancy, forgiveness of injuries, holiness of life, and of unlooked-for conversions. For example:

"I give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to God that which is God's," a brave woman said, when offered the Oath of Supremacy. A gentleman threatened with the pillory wrote to tell his wife he must give up his faith, he could not bear such ignominy. But she, from her prison, exhorted him to persevere and suffer all for the love of God. Her strong words brought strength; later, the two ended their lives in prison together.† [Mrs. Landers.]

O Lord,
I pray that thou wouldst spare
The workers of my web of woe,
The causers of my care;
I humbly Thee beseech, O Lord,
Even by Thy Blessed Blood,
Forgive their guilt, forgive their ill,
And send them all much good,‡

Francis Tregian wrote with a pin and the snuff of a candle. He was a prisoner, and his wife and

* Chambers' "Pictorial History of England."
† "Troubles," Series III.
‡ "Troubles," Series I., p. 126.

ixty, eighty, and sometimes a hundred in a day, o whom he gave great alms. And yet is also amous his valour and fidelity to his friends."

No wonder Mary Ward was proud of her father. Of her mother, Ursula Wright, we know little more than that she was Marmaduke's equal in rank, in virtue, and zeal for the Catholic faith.

Mary, Marmaduke's eldest child, was born on January 23rd, 1585. She was called Joan until she was confirmed; but disliking the name she changed it to Mary. Hence she has been always known and loved by the name of Mary Ward.

We get the earliest glimpse of the baby when it is taking its first tottering steps. It cannot speak, but it is able to shuffle slowly along the floor, grasping gratefully at anything upright within reach. Ursula and another lady are standing in the room watching the progress of their pet. Suddenly the child takes an unexpected turn and threatens to fall out of the window. The mother is stupefied with fear. "Jesus, bless my child," she cries; and the little one, turning slowly round, says with a sweet baby smile, "*Jesus.*" It was her first word, and last for some months to come, but one that might well stand alone.

As the years went by, Mary's nursery was shared by little brothers and sisters. Hers was a happy home notwithstanding the hard times and the dark forebodings for the future. Marmaduke lived in great retirement, devoted to study, and to the education of his children. In after years Mary tells us, in her short biography, how wonderfully careful he was of their innocence, and how his one great dread seems to have been that any of them

should lose their faith. "He would rather hav seen me dead," she says, "than offend God by si of mine."

When about five years old* she was playing with a companion in a room where her father, bus writing, was far too much engrossed to know wha was going on. In the warmth of the game th little visitor uttered an oath. Of all bad habit Marmaduke hated swearing most, and Mary though a baby, was aware of the fact. To sho her father that she, too, disliked wicked words, sh repeated them over again by way of reprehension hoping, she says, he would hear and love her th better. But alas for Mary! Marmaduke ha finished his writing, and, as he laid down his pe he heard her speech and thought she was swearing It was never his custom to chastise the childre himself. Yet on this occasion his horror was s great that, without asking for an explanation, h strode towards the supposed culprit and "wit great choler *corrected* her then and there." "After wards," she adds pathetically, "he heard me speak.

When not quite five Mary went to live with he grandmother. How it came about that her parent sent her away so early, neither she nor any one else tells. But whatever the reason, she lost little by the change, for the Ploughland† household was an

* In this autobiography, written at the request of her confessor, Mary has gathered together anecdotes of her childhood and such childish faults as she could remember, setting them down without any attempt at exaggeration, exactly as they occurred to her mind.

† The inheritance of the Wrights for many generations. The site, now occupied by a farm-house, stood on an eminence near Pattrington, East Riding of Yorkshire. ("History of Holderness," Vol. II., by Poulson.)

ideal sixteenth century home. In those times a great lady's training did not leave her ignorant of manual work, nor was it her duty to sit the greater part of the day idle to receive idlers. The mistress of the family was as active as the best of housekeepers nowadays. Every morning after breakfast she visited the dairy and the buttery, stood at the gate and helped the poor to bread and meat. She made jam and confectionery, concocted simple medicines for the sick, taught her children to spin, to embroider, and to say their prayers.

Such a valiant woman, according to Solomon's idea, was Mrs. Wright, Mary's grandmother. And she was valiant also in the modern sense of the word. As a confessor for the Faith she had spent fourteen years in a common gaol, sharing food and lodging with the lowest criminals. And when at last she had been released and allowed to return home, her movements were watched and her doings reported to the Earl of Huntingdon, President of the North, who summoned her at will to appear before him.

Mary writes with great admiration of her grandmother :

"I remained with her near five years, the most of which time I lodged [slept] with herself, for the house being great she was very careful lest of idle or ill company I should be drawn to offend God. And so great a prayer she was as that I do not remember in that whole five years that ever I saw her sleep, nor did I ever awake, when I perceived her not at prayer."

God only knows what lasting impressions are made in childhood. The little thing went to bed early and rose with the first rays of the sun, and

the last sight at night and the first in the morning was that holy woman at prayer. So Mary concluded that her grandmother never slept, but prayed all night. When occasionally she woke in the dark and still found her on her knees, her opinion was confirmed. The lesson sank deep into the child's heart; she, too, became a "great prayer." She recited the whole rosary, the greater day-hours and many other prayers every day—no small task for a little girl of her age.

Charity towards the poor and suffering was one of the virtues Mary learned when very young. At Mulwith she had seen beggars relieved and the sick nursed, but at Ploughland she first heard of the poor prisoners in their miserable cells—cold, without proper food or decent clothing. Mrs. Wright compassionated them as only an ex-prisoner could and worked, and saved, and collected for their benefit, secretly sending large alms in food and clothing and money to the different Yorkshire prisons. Mary gives us the following account of the share she took in this distribution of alms:

"She [her grandmother] used to provide much alms for other like prisoners, which she sent them privately several times of the year. Once I heard her give orders (amongst other things) for the killing of certain pullen [poultry], some of which I called and accounted mine, coaxing them as children will such toys. I was sorry, but made no sign to have understood of any such thing. Soon after I asked my grandmother, which appeared to show devotion, when she would send any alms to the prison. She bid me tell why I asked. I answered, because I was desirous such pullen

infant children were cast out upon the world to die of starvation.

A priest in a wretched prison consulted his brother priest as to whether he should continue his corporal mortification. "No," was the answer, "you must not punish a body so soon to be glorified."*

Four felons witnessed the death of four martyr priests. "Sure, they were God's priests," they said; "we will die in the faith they died; this is a preaching unto us: they die for Him that died for them."†

Thirty-six persons were reconciled by one priest; another brought back to the true faith 160 defaulters. Men were imprisoned and cruelly racked to make them betray their friends, and they would not yield.

Those who died on the scaffold were seen to kiss the gibbet for joy, to give gold pieces to their executioner, and, with their last breath, were heard to pray for the sovereign by whose unjust laws they perished. Glorious martyrs of England, brave and fearless, with your tender hearts and strong wills, we are proud of you—proud to be of your race, proud to profess your faith.

Nighest to us of the white-robed host,
Bound to us as our kith and kin;
Get us the love that counts no cost,
That knows no fear but the fear of sin.

King of the Martyrs! these are they
Whose blood was shed in our land for Thee;
King of the Martyrs! hasten the day
When we their triumph on earth shall see.

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* "Troubles," Series III., p. 40.
† "Troubles," Series III.

Perhaps of all England Mary Ward's county of Yorkshire stands out in the records of the time as most conspicuous for heroic virtue. And since everything connected with Mary is of interest to us, it will not be going out of our way to cite what a famous Jesuit of James I.'s reign wrote of the Babthorpes of Hemingborough—near relations of Mary's father—who may be taken as a specimen of many a noble English house. Father Pollard writes of the Yorkshire Catholics generally :

"Such is the resolution and constancy of the Catholics of those parts that, notwithstanding all these troubles and vexations, they have rather increased than decayed ; God be praised for it ! The numbers of those condemned to perpetual prison and losses of goods and lands for refusing the late oath, I think is greater in York Prison than in all the prisons of England besides."*

Of the Babthorpes he says :

"Our house I might rather count as a religious house than otherwise, for though there lived together in it three knights and their ladies, with their families, yet we had all our servants Catholic. On the Sundays we locked up the doors, and all came to Mass, had our sermons, catechisms, and spiritual lessons every Sunday and holy day. On the work days we had for the most part two Masses, and of them the one for the servants at six of the clock in the morning, at which the gentlemen every one of them without fail, and the ladies if they were not sick, would even in the midst of winter of their own accord be present ; and the other we had at eight of the clock for

* Father Pollard's Relation, Series III., "Troubles."

those who were absent from the first. In the afternoon at four o'clock we had Evensong, and after that Matins, at which all the knights and their ladies, except extraordinary occasions did hinder them, would be present and stay at their prayers all the time the priests were at Evensong and Matins. The most of them used daily some meditations and mental prayer, and all at the least every fourteen days and great feasts did confess and communicate ; and after supper every night at nine of the clock we had all together Litanies, and so immediately to bed."*

* Father Pollard's Recollections of the Yorkshire Mission, Series III., "Troubles."

CHAPTER II.

"Loveliest light
Of innocence and joy was on that face."
—AUBREY DE VERE.

NEAR Ripon, in Yorkshire, there was a manor house called "Mulwith."* It belonged to Marmaduke Ward, a gentleman who owned the estates of Mulwith, Givendale,† and Newby Hall.‡ Genealogists have traced his descent back to the time of King Egbert,§ and have noted that seven brothers of the family in William the Conqueror's reign were "Equites Aurati." But his claim to golden spurs and Saxon blood is not half so interesting to us as the following description, written by a contemporary:

"His name is . . . famous in that country for his exceeding comeliness of person, sweetness and beauty of face, and activeness, the knightly exercises in which he excelled, and above all for his constancy and courage in the Catholic religion, admirable charity to the poor, so as in extreme dearth never was poor denied at his gate, commonly

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* A modern farm-house now marks the site.

† "A fair manor place of stone" (Leland), now a farm-house. The coat-of-arms belonging to the Wards of Givendale is to be seen in Ripon Cathedral, on the stone screen of the choir.

‡ An elegant mansion, four miles from Ripon.

§ Bailey, F.S.A.

hould be so bestowed. This seemed to please her much, and I said it only to gain her esteem."

No doubt she did. She probably loved praise, as most children love it; still, we cannot quite believe that the only, or even the strongest, motive in that big heart was "to gain esteem."

Living with Mary at the big manor house was a relation of Mrs. Ward, a vain young girl, as empty-headed as most vain girls are, but possessing tact enough to conceal her levity from the vigilant grandmother. Mary became warmly attached to this child, who was probably little older than herself, and the two spent their study and play-time together. Much leisure for play neither children could have had, for they were kept fully occupied, not only in learning needlework, but in studying languages, both Latin and Italian.

"I want both time and words to express," Mary writes, "the many and great dangers I so narrowly escaped in those five years while I lived where she [her little companion] was, but I now see they were such, all considered, as none but God, who can do all things, could have preserved me from falling most grievously into that which, once begun, would by all likelihood have been my eternal ruin. I was not then addicted to any one virtue. When my grandmother commanded me to pray, I sat in the place, but spent my time in sports. Yet wanted I not wit to seek cunningly to have my own will oft-times by others, and to excuse it, sometimes in covert, or otherwise. This my lack of virtue disposed me, if occasion had been offered, for vice, and the company of my kinswoman might have afforded means; and supposing my fall, my

bashfulness was such as that in all likelihood I should have committed a greater sin than before by concealing what was done and passed. O my God, in what state had I now been if You had not done all!"

"Lord, have a care of me this day," said the humble Philip Neri, "or I shall betray Thee." So felt Mary. She had been in hourly peril during those years of close companionship; but through the grace of God and her co-operation she had not sinned. Child though she was, she steered clear, where one she loved fell, and she kept her soul spotless with a companion who was not good.

Mary's young kinswoman seems to have been active in all kinds of mischief. She managed to introduce vulgar superstitious practices even into Mrs. Wright's well-governed house. The object of fasting on St. Agnes' Eve, which Mary mentions below, was to obtain in a dream a sight of the future husband or wife. The device of the "sieve and shears" was resorted to by the common folk for the discovery of a thief.

"In this five years my fortune was asked and told several times: once or twice I think I procured it; at the least, as I remember, I was glad to have it, and according to my capacity believed what was said. I once attempted to fast St. Agnes' fast, and did till I felt myself starved with hunger, for the foolish and accustomed reason, as I remember, by the speech and example of my aforesaid kinswoman, and fasted for a good part of the day; but being then very hungry, I broke off. I think I once procured that unlawful practice of sieve and

hears to be done, exercised and holp to do it nyself, for the finding out of a trifle of mine that vas lost; and I am morally certain that in the xecution of these three last things I had some ear and understanding that they were sin. If hese years I remembered any one act that were ood, I would truthfully set it down, for I am to ell all."

To all His saints God does not give exterior attractiveness. But to some beautiful souls He gives a beautiful outfit—a face perfect in feature and expression, moulded, as it were, by the loveliness within, and winning ways, and great talents and influence over others. His instruments are His own; He can make them as He chooses. Mary Ward He made beautiful. It is written of her at this age that "her features were exquisite, her look angelic, and her modesty sweet and graceful." And so she remained all her life, attracting, influencing, alluring all to good, all to God.

Of this attractiveness in childhood we have the following account. She was on a visit at Ripley Castle,* and about nine years old. One of the guests was a Protestant boy who later became a student of the English College at Rome. He had long and earnest talks with Mary, and it is amusing to notice how sedately he speaks of the little girl:

"Whilst I was there a certain noble Catholic virgin (Mary Ward) had lately arrived, with whom

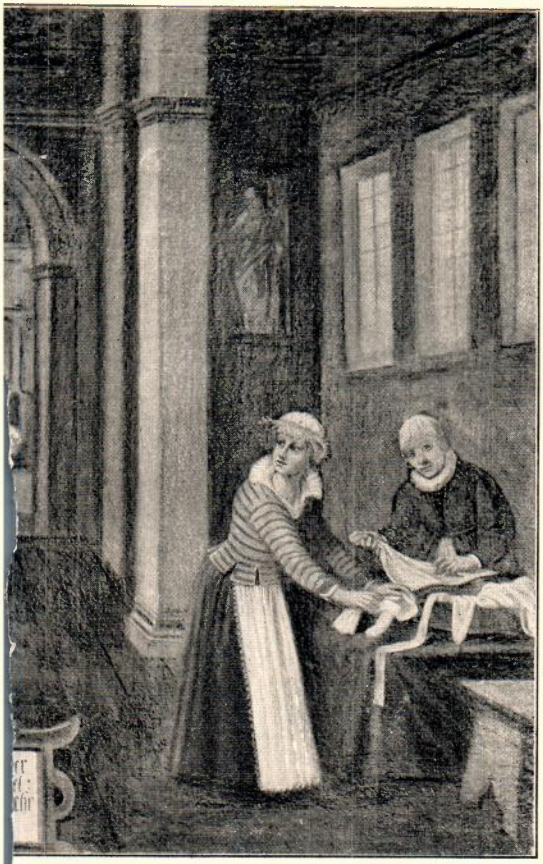
*A fine old mansion near Harrogate, the seat of the Inglebys.

I very frequently conversed upon the subject o the Catholic faith, and who satisfactorily removed many doubts from my mind, and some others were postponed for the time, as she said she was going to her grandmother (Mrs. Wright) who lived near in a day or two, who would remove every doubt from me. . . . On my departure the noble lady gave me a rosary, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and the Psalter of Jesus."

When the five years at Ploughland came to an end, Mary returned to her own quiet home at Mulwith, and took her place among her little brothers and sisters. There were at least five of them—Barbara, one year younger than Mary, and Elizabeth, who both joined Mary's Institute; Teresa, who became, like her patron saint, a Carmelite nun and "Teresa of Jesus"; John, the eldest and dearest of her brothers, "the most like and sympathising with her," who was "wounded in a duel, received the Last Sacraments, and died Christian-like"; and George, of whom we shall hear later, at this time a baby of a few weeks old.

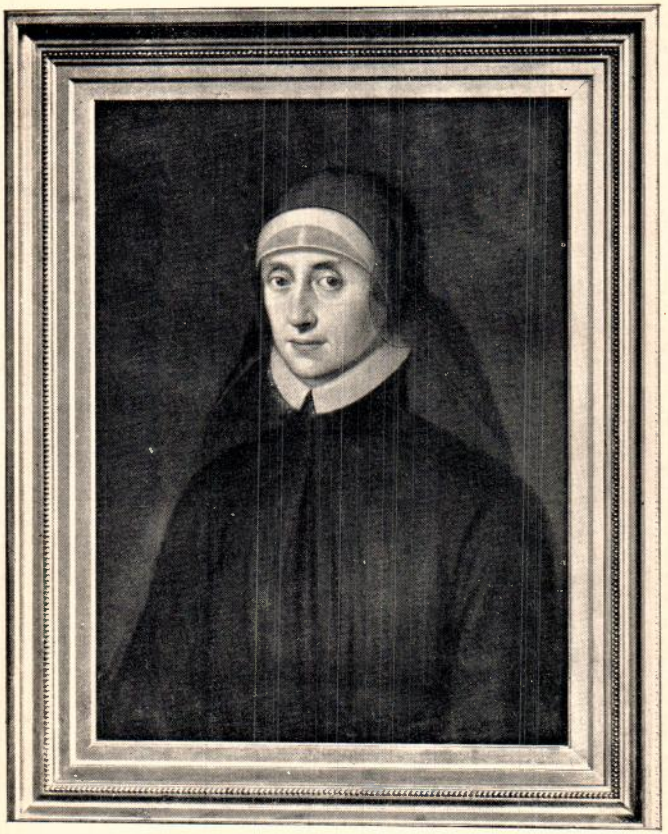
A child of the sixteenth century at ten was considered almost grown up and of a marriageable age, but Mary kept her childlike spirit for some years longer.

One day, at bedtime, she was conducted to her room with the other children. Being extra tired, or extra frolicsome, she insisted upon being carried upstairs by the maid. The poor thing put her on her shoulder and trudged up wearily step by step. But Mary was heavy, and the burden proved too much for the willing shoulders. Down came the little one on her head and struck it such a blow



ORD MARY SPOKE."

To face p. 13.



MARY WARD

(From a painting in possession of St. Mary's Convent, Ascot).

MARY WARD.

that she lay on the stairs stunned and speechless. Terrified, the young servant laid her in bed, fully convinced that the end was come. Mary was conscious, however; for years after, she remembered having felt a longing desire to say the Holy Name. If only she could pronounce that one word she would be content to die, she had thought. She struggled hard, and at last the numb lips formed, and a low murmured sound came forth. "Jesus," she said, and with the word came joy and sweetness into her soul, the stunned feeling passed away, all pain left her, and she slept quietly.

One Feast of the Purification the dreadful cry, "Fire!" resounded through the house. The old mansion was in flames, and the servants rushed from all parts of the estate to save the building. Terror and confusion reigned everywhere. Marmaduke Ward was standing on the terrace helping his men to get the flames under, when he missed three of the children. Without a word to any one, he rushed back into the burning pile and searched high and low, in spite of falling timbers and suffocating smoke. Coming to the lower story, he pushed open the door of one of the rooms and caught sight of Mary on her knees, with her two little sisters beside her. They were saying the rosary. He snatched up the two little ones in his arms, and, taking Mary by the hand, pushed his way through the darkened passages out into the open air.

The following is Mary's quaint account of this fire:

"I had great confidence in the power and help of our Blessed Lady when I was yet young.

When I was but at ten years old, and so much as betwixt St. Emerantiana's Day, in January, and the Feast of the Purification of our Blessed Lady, the Lent following, upon which day my father had great loss by fire, I, being present and seeing the danger, called earnestly upon our Blessed Lady, beseeching her to extinguish the fire, often repeated with great confidence that if it were not her feast I should fear the worst, but being hers I had no doubt but that she would help us, etc."

Though full of confidence that our Lady could save her and her little sisters and the house, she seemed to have some anxiety about a box of "silk furniture and damask linen" that was put aside for herself. This, with the help of her sister, she pushed into the chimney corner of a lower room. It would be hard to say what amount of safety could be derived from the chimney corner, but the linen deposited there:

"We set ourselves to pray the Mother of God that she would not permit the house to be burnt, etc.; and this with great earnestness and confidence, in which prayer we had all three been burnt, but that our Lord provided, by the intercession of His Blessed Mother, as I verily believe, that my father (whose love to his children was boundless), seeing the case irremediable, the whole house of a flame and all in it to be lost, called for his children, and, missing us three, himself entered the house again."

"The child is father to the man," is an old saying which has lost all freshness. But the truth it contains is older still—old as man himself almost. The child who kept guard over her baby sisters,

praying with absolute faith and perfect composure in the midst of the maddening shouts of terror-struck servants, looking immediately to God for help, is the same Mary who, when destruction worse than fire threatened all she held most dear, turned to God and asked Him for help with as absolute a trust as the little untried child. Years of disappointment, suspense, and hope deferred had not untaught her her faith and trust in Him Who is the "Faithful and True."

The year 1557 proved a fearful year for the Catholics of Yorkshire. Lord Huntingdon, President of the North, was exerting himself with malicious cruelty to carry out Elizabeth's commission to suppress Catholicity in his dominion. His is an unenviable notoriety. He was of a butcherly mind, we are told; his face was the face of a tyrant; and he wielded the powers of a magistrate, president, king. There was no higher authority to whom he need turn for leaves. He had a council of picked men—pursuivants, spies, informers, servants, executioners—all ready to do his bidding at a nod. For twenty-seven years he ruled with a cruelty worthy of a Nero. Houses were ransacked, Catholics driven to dwell in woods and caverns, priests were executed, gentlemen and ladies herded with felons in a common prison. Redress there was none. The President boasted in open court that no Catholic should have justice at his hands. And he was one whom Elizabeth honoured with the title of "Right trusty and right well-beloved cousin."

No wonder Marmaduke Ward found himself obliged to leave Newby, where he lived after the

fire, and betake himself out of the tyrant's way. He fled to Northumberland, leaving Mary at Harewell with a relation of his, a Mrs. Ardington, who shares with Mrs. Wright and so many other noble ladies the title of "Confessor of the Faith." The temptation to relate all that is said in the "Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers" about this heroic woman is great, but it would not do. It will be sufficient to say that her house was one on which the persecutors had set their mark, and that she herself, as a notorious recusant, was liable to imprisonment in a common prison whenever they thought fit to serve a writ upon her.

It was in this holy woman's house that Mary made her first Communion. She was thirteen. Like her it was to begin her preparation on a Feast of Our Lady, August 15th, and to choose another feast, our Lady's Birthday, on which to make it. And it was like her, too, to put her whole heart and soul into the preparation. Everything else was laid aside—her work, her lessons, her play even. She told all in the house, both friends and servants, that they must on no account come into her room to disturb her. She had much to do for God, she said, and she wanted all her mind to do it well.

But an event that happened about this time disturbed her more than friends and servants put together could have done. One evening, when the great bell was summoning the household to supper, Mary was told that a gentleman on horseback with letters from her father was asking to see her. News from the North was as rare as it was precious, and she hastened down to her visitor. He told her he had a letter from her father, but, as he could not give it into her hands, he would read it to her.

The letter was short, and contained but two injunctions: she was to put away all thought of making her first Communion, and she was to hold herself in readiness to marry a gentleman of her father's choosing—one of the Talbots of Grafton. The horseman rode off, and Mary turned, sad and bewildered, towards the house. Not for one moment did she suppose that she had been deceived—that her father had sent no such messenger. And she was heart-broken to think that her father, so staunch and true a Catholic, was seeking to keep her from Holy Communion. For fear of bringing discredit upon him she dared not take counsel, nor so much as mention the occurrence. But she did the wisest thing under the circumstances. She prayed, and two brave resolutions were the result of her prayer: she would make her first Communion on the first opportunity, and she would tell her father that she wished never to marry. Peace returned. A letter from her father, disowning the messenger, promised her she should never marry against her will.

CHAPTER III.

"Beauteous in childhood, now in maiden dawn
She witched the world with beauty."

—A. DE VERE.

ONE of the cleverest pictures in the *Painted Life* * represents Mary, about the age of thirteen, being taken home by her father. The picture is divided into three panels. In the first Mary is having an interview with a young cavalier, whose rueful face plainly shows that he is deeply disappointed. Several ladies and gentlemen in the upper end of the room are watching the young pair with keen interest.

Marmaduke and Mary occupy the second panel. She is looking distressed and worn, her hands are outstretched as if pleading her cause, whilst the father listens thoughtfully.

In the third panel, Mary is seated on a sturdy white pony, the troubled look has gone, and she appears more like a delighted child of the present day than a sixteenth century young lady. Her white frock is adorned with little crosses and flowers; her hat, a high-crowned beaver, with straight feathers. By her side stands her father, just about

* The *Painted Life*, a series of fifty large oil paintings, preserved at Augsburg in the Convent of the Institute, and dating from the seventeenth century. They portray remarkable events of Mary Ward's life. (See Intro., Vol. I., "Life of Mary Ward." Sister M. Catherine Chambers.)

to mount, and in the background is the escort of servants and gentlemen ready for the journey. These are well drawn. But it is in the undisguised look of relief and satisfaction on Mary's little face that the artist's skill is shown. So unmistakable is the pleasure depicted there, that we long to know the cause. The old German inscription, still quite legible, tells us. "Mary, who had given her whole heart to God, was so much troubled by the attention of a young cavalier of high birth, that she was taken seriously ill. Her father was sent for, and he immediately took her away with him to Newby." These few words, together with the painting, graphically describe the state of affairs.

After a few happy months spent at Newby, with his children once more around him, Marmaduke Ward was again compelled to flee to the North and to make provision for his little daughter during his absence. There was no one to whom he could more safely confide her than to the Babthorpes, his near relations, who lived, as we have seen, near Hemingborough.

This little village, about fifteen miles from York, in the valley of the Derwent, had been the home of the Babthorpes for centuries. Their mansion and the beautiful spire of the village church were the most conspicuous objects for miles round. The peasantry and village folk were devoted to the family, and well they might be, for a grander specimen of true English gentry and loyal-hearted Catholics were not to be found in the length and breadth of England.

Mary felt the separation from her parents keenly, but years later, when looking back upon her

past life, she gave thanks to God for His loving Providence over her at this time.

"O Parent of parents, and Friend of all friend . . . Thou tookest me into Thy care, and by degrees led me from all else, that at length I might see and settle my love in Thee. What had I ever done to please Thee? or what was there in me wherewith to serve Thee? O happy begun freedom, the beginning of all my good, and more worth me at that time than the whole world besides."

Mary was a tall, stately girl, reserved and shy in manner, when she first went to Babthorpe. We can picture her to ourselves in the grand old mansion with the knights and ladies in their rich Elizabethan dresses: the women in their pointed bodices, farthingales, and hoops; the men in their ruffs and purpoints, long gloves, and wide-awake hats. There was the father, Sir Ralph, summoned almost weekly to take the Oath of Supremacy, escaping only by sudden flight and mysterious absences from home; his wife, Lady Grace, once a prisoner in Sheriff Hutton, now at large in her own house, surrounded by seven children of whom any mother might be proud: William, the heir, a staunch Catholic, who later will lose his lands but keep his faith; Ralph and Robert, future Jesuits; and Barbara, the youngest, Mary Ward's spiritual daughter. These are some of her daily companions, and for seven years she lives with them as one of the family, loves them as a sister, and is loved by them with a strong, lasting affection.

When fifteen years old, Mary first distinctly heard our Lord's invitation, "If thou wilt be

perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; *and come, follow Me.*" Such an invitation is always a test. Like the young man in the Gospel, Mary might have "gone away sad," for she had great possessions. Let us hear what she says of herself:

"Betwixt fifteen and sixteen years of my age, so near as I can remember, it pleased our loving Lord to inspire me with a desire to lead a religious life, in general, for I had no instruction touching any particular Order, nor means to inform myself in that, living in a country infected with heresy. Neither had I the curiosity to ask any one the difference between them. My loving Lord did so touch my heart with a longing desire to dedicate myself to His Divine service, as that I do not remember since, any one moment in which I had not rather have suffered death than betaken myself to a worldly life."

He showed her, she tells us, His heavenly beauty, and adds, with great simplicity, "I saw there was none to compare with it." From that time the knights and ladies had little of her company. They saw her in chapel, and noted her reverence and abstraction; they met her at table, and remarked her abstemiousness and her modest behaviour. They were a little amused, too, at her deep blushes when her health was drunk, and the still deeper blush when she was called upon to drink the health of another. She never joined in their sports, nor made one of a party of pleasure. She had too much to do to get her heart ready. In her solitude she learned to know

herself, to take herself in hand and to conquer her faults. Like her grandmother, "she was a great prayer," and spent hours together in the private chapel in the house. Of other spiritual help she had little, for the visits of her confessor were few and far between. Thus she was thrown much upon her own resources. Besides, being naturally reserved, she found it hard to speak of what passed within her. There are some souls to whom it is a relief to pour into a confessor's ear the whole working of their mind ; they like their souls to be transparent, that the light of guidance may pierce their inmost recesses. There are others whose shyness makes self-revelation a difficulty. Both classes of souls have their dangers, and both are kept right by simplicity—that is, the desire of pleasing God alone.

It was her simplicity and her isolation that led our Lord to supply Himself the guidance she needed. Sometimes, indeed, He sent her wise and holy priests: on one occasion Father Mush, who had been Blessed Margaret Clitheroe's director ; at another Father Holtby, a learned and holy Jesuit ; and Father Gerard, the confessor of the Faith. But these were sometimes absent for years together.

It is delightful to see the vigour with which she attacked her faults of character. The eldest daughter of an aristocratic house, allied to the noblest families of Yorkshire, gifted with unusual beauty and grace of person and manner, and with the power of attracting good and bad alike, she was conscious of a love of esteem which, if allowed to go unchecked, would prove a danger to her soul. Mary found a remedy.

The great hall at Babthorpe was often full of guests assembled for hawking and hunting parties. At these gatherings there might be seen passing amongst the gay ladies and gentlemen a young girl with tucked-up sleeves and large apron, in one hand a mop, in the other a pail. "A servant going to her morning's cleaning," the guests thought; or "A maid hired to help with the extra work." Many never found out their mistake. The medicine, if bitter, was effective, and to it she added others. "With her own hands," says an old biographer, "she washed the linen, cleaned the plate, scrubbed the rooms, and fed the fowl."

Another defect—daintiness in attire, and an excessive regard for cleanliness—she attacked with characteristic vigour. Acting, as we may well believe, under an impulse of grace, she overcame herself so far as to share the bed of one of the servants who was suffering from the itch. She took the disease and bore it without nursing.

Spiritual reading was one of Mary's favourite occupations. The library at Babthorpe could not have been large in those early days of the art of printing; but one treasure she possessed—Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat." The book had been given to her by one of her confessors, whose permission she had asked to make a general confession, and who, in answer, told her to study that little work instead. She did study it, and formed her whole spiritual life upon its teaching, keeping it by her to the hour of her death. Any one who knows the book will easily believe that to an earnest soul like Mary's it teems with suggestions; and had it not been for her good common sense, she might

have been bewildered by its many practices. She says:

"Almighty God is not served by disquiet, but has a far greater pleasure in a cheerful, joyous zeal; besides, all virtue is well ordered and enlarges the heart, and makes it light rather than heavy and narrow. I must strive diligently after this. But because I cannot always do what I gladly would, I must not be disturbed, but submit myself peacefully to God's will, and humble myself in the knowledge of my weakness."

Another great help to her was the Lives of the Saints, whose practices of devotion and penance she imitated as far as she could. Of one saint she read that he dedicated every room in the house to some special patron, and whilst in it practised the particular virtues which had distinguished that saint. Mary followed his example with such fidelity that years after, when she returned to the house, the sight of the rooms brought the recollection of her saints so strongly before her that she forgot her actual surroundings, and was hardly polite to those who were welcoming her.

But the Lives of the Martyrs more than any other reading moved Mary at this time. She wanted a martyr's crown. "O Lord," she used to exclaim, "how many crowns of martyrdom Thou hast distributed! Hast Thou none for me?" Her own kindred had won them. Francis Ingleby at York, Father Edward Thwing, and Robert Middleton at Lancaster. Why should she not be crowned too? A few years back Margaret Clitheroe, the Pearl of York, had died for the Faith. What others had

done for our Lord, she, with His grace, could likewise do.

These were animating thoughts; but our Lord gave her to understand that she was to live for His honour and glory, and that her martyrdom was the martyrdom of the three vows. This light was enkindled further by some talks she had at this time. In a quiet room in the big house, the old housekeeper, Margaret Garret, sat and sewed. To this room Mary and her little friend Barbara often came for a chat; for the old woman had numerous stories to tell of religious men and women in times gone by who had devoted themselves to God's service in the cloister, in prayer, and fasting. Some of these servants of God Margaret had known well, and many beautiful things she told her listeners. The picture in the *Painted Life* has a pretty group of these listeners. Old Margaret, sitting upright in her easy chair, at a respectful distance from her young mistresses, is making a little frock. Mary, in rapt attention, has let her embroidery fall upon her knee; and Barbara, just seven years old, the youngest daughter of the ancient house, is working intently by Mary's side. In the background are two servants: one, with sleeves tucked up, on the stairs, holds a newly starched ruff; the other winds thread from an old-fashioned turning stand.

Nor were the stories told to the two young children heard and forgotten; they sank deep and bore fruit. Barbara's vocation dated from those hours with the good housekeeper, and Mary's desire to spend herself in prayer and fasting for the good of her neighbours increased. One day, whilst troubling somewhat because her longing for martyrdom had decreased, our Lord again made her

understand that His will for her was the religious life and the perfect keeping of the three vows. Only in a dim way Mary understood, and for years to come our Lord showed her only dimly what He wanted for her. She was in a particular way the child of His Providence. We feel half sorry when little children grow up and are able to guide and guard themselves. We should almost like to keep them always dependent on our care. Our Lord keeps some of His saints as children always. He only shows them a little of their way at a time; He makes them come back to Him when they have gone a few steps, and tells them what to do next. Step by step He leads them on, and they have to turn their faces always to Him lest they miss a sign of His.

Years rolled on, and Mary passed from youth to womanhood. In 1605, when she was twenty years of age, it became generally known that she intended to be a religious. "Thank God!" we imagine we hear her good father and mother say. But this was not so. True and staunch Catholics as were her parents, and good and holy her relations, they one and all opposed her. That she, so young, so beautiful, with expectations, with unusual influence for good, should leave her home and her country—the idea was ridiculous.

"So is it ever, when a favourite child, considered promising by the world, desires the religious state," says an early biographer. "Every friend, companion, and acquaintance knows how to put in his word, from the highest to the lowest—all, even to the coachman and footboy, can sing their little song against religious Orders. They are a 'cursed land,' they say, 'a land which devours its inhabitants.'

But if, on the contrary, one ill favoured and little thought of by the world seeks to go into some convent, then every one sings a very different little song. They know not how sufficiently to praise nuns. What a beautiful, pure, pious, and peaceful life they lead! There is nothing they would sooner be than a nun; the religious state then is nothing but a land of promise—a land full of sweetest milk and honey."

Besides, some, as is usual in such cases, alleged her health would never stand the strain of religious life; the change of diet, of air, the austerity, and the enclosure would kill her. She must remain at home, marry, and help others to save their souls.

To help others to save their souls was a strong argument, but nothing moved Mary. She listened to all that was said; she looked at the dear faces of those she loved; she thought of the homes of her childhood—Mulwith, Newby, Ripley Castle, Ardington, Babthorpe—of all the noble, high-minded souls she had met in them; yet she turned her back upon all for One she loved better.

But Marmaduke Ward had made his own plans for Mary's future. Since the age of ten her hand, by his consent, had been asked in marriage. Strange it seems to us; but three hundred years have passed over England, and customs have changed. Many "eligible parties," as Mary describes them, had been amongst her suitors during those childish years; yet nearly all were so distasteful to her that she accuses herself of want of common charity in their regard. Nor did her father put any pressure upon her then. She was his dearly loved child, and she should be free to choose whom she liked.

Liberal and kind as he was, however, it never

occurred to him to allow her to choose nobody. His plans for her now were ambitious. There was in Yorkshire at this time a nobleman who by right of succession was the seventh Earl of Westmoreland, but who, being a Catholic, stood more chance of losing his life than gaining his inheritance. It was hoped, however, that with prudence, the help of powerful friends, *and money*, he might in time be successful in asserting his right. Though nearly twice Mary's age, Edmund Neville was in other respects eligible. He was intellectual, of a gentle disposition, and very devoted to her.

Marmaduke favoured his suit in every way, and that with the best of intentions. He had seen wonders worked by holy wives and mothers. He had seen them keep their children untainted in the midst of heresy, and strengthen their husbands to endure loss of worldly goods, of honour, of life even. Would not Mary be such a valiant woman? Was she not firm in faith, of undaunted courage, and strong through her union with God? He pictured her at the head of a large establishment, winning all by her gracious ways, secretly harbouring priests, procuring the Sacraments for the people around her, helping the poor and destitute, and bringing up her children as true and loyal and brave as herself. What was a life shut up in a cloister in a foreign land, doing good to her own soul only, compared with a life as fruitful in good as this?

In the midst of these dreams the rumour ran from Babthorpe that Mary had rejected Neville's offer of marriage. The news was a blow to her father. He procured an interview with his daughter,

and strictly forbade her to cross the seas without his express leave. Mary said nothing in reply. "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye," St. Peter said.* This was her thought. She could not find it in her heart to grieve her father by remonstrance, but she made up her mind privately to leave England on the first opportunity.

Marmaduke was too good a Catholic to settle such a question of conscience off hand, and on his own authority alone. He resolved to go up to London, and to take Mary with him. There he would see her confessor, Father Holtby,† explain matters to him, and from his lips she should hear the decision. Mary fell in gladly with this arrangement, and father and daughter travelled south together.

It was the month of November, 1605. When the travellers reached Warwickshire dreadful news was current. A diabolical plot, it was said, had been discovered by the vigilance of the Government. The Catholics had planned to blow up the King, Lords, and Commons. One of the conspirators had been found in the act of committing the desperate deed; the rest had fled into the country, where they were being hunted down.

What was Marmaduke's horror when he heard that John and Christopher Wright and Thomas Percie, his brothers-in-law, were amongst the plotters, and that the Winters, relations of his,

* Acts iv.

† Father Holtby, of the Society of Jesus, Vice-Prefect of the English Mission in 1606. ("Troubles," Series III.)

were also involved in the horrible scheme? Worse news followed. The two Wrights had fled to Holbeach, where they had been taken and shot; Thomas Percie was mortally wounded. The country was up in arms. A panic ensued, and searching inquiries were made. Marmaduke Ward was arrested and imprisoned, but nothing could be proved against him, and he was set free.

With sad hearts Mary and her father made the rest of the journey to London. Relations near and dear to them had fallen as traitors. We know nowadays how few were the real plotters. We know, too, how the crime of a handful of desperate men, if such it were, was skilfully used by those in power to raise for their own ends a panic in the country. Fear is cowardly, and its precautions are cruel. The Catholics, hardly used before, were now treated with greater severity, not only as being "hateful to God," but—what to some minds was more to the point—dangerous to men.

This same November was to add to these troubles a personal one for Mary, one that she had little feared. Father Holtby was a saintly, prudent man; he had known her for seven years, and had encouraged her in her religious vocation. She was confident that in his hands her future was safe. Yet even he was to fail her for a moment.

The interview took place at Baldwin's Gardens, Holborn. There Father Holtby told her in the strongest terms that it was her duty to marry Edmund Neville. More glory would be given to God by the marriage than by her becoming a nun. The state of England, he said, demanded the sacrifice.

We think it heroic when human love is given up

for a greater good. What shall we think when a soul like Mary's is asked to take human love for the Divine? What should she do? How could she doubt her confessor's word? God must surely speak to her through him. And yet how could she mistrust the interior voice that whispered so low yet so distinctly? She fasted and prayed. "Lord," she said, "Thou must answer for me."

One morning after the interview, Father Holtby said Mass in her father's lodgings at Baldwin's Gardens. Mary assisted, calm and recollected. When it was over, and he was washing his hands, she handed him the towel. As she did so she caught sight of his face, down which the tears were streaming fast, and heard him exclaim, "What! is it possible that I should live to offend my God?" He made his thanksgiving; it was long and earnest. Then he called Mary, and told her that he not only left her free to follow her vocation, but would help her by every means in his power. What had happened to change the prudent director's mind? At Mass that morning the sacred contents of the chalice had been spilled, the Father's eyes had been opened, and our Lord had answered for His own.*

In less than a year from that day Mary had bid farewell to all she held most dear, crossed the water, and landed safely in a foreign country. What months of suffering those had been! There was the hard good-bye, the dangers of the journey, the hardships of the voyage, and—something far

* Edmund Neville died a professed Father of the Society of Jesus, worn out by sufferings endured for the Faith, a martyr in all but name.

worse. As she sailed away from England a darkness crept over her soul. All joy left her. A strange land and strange people, whose language even she did not know, an unprovided future, an undefined vocation—this was all God had given her for leaving home for His sake. He had called her, like Abraham, without telling her how or where she was to serve Him. She must trust, and day by day ask for her daily bread. It was a merciful darkness. Could she have borne the sight of the hard life, the suspense, the trials of soul and body, that were awaiting her?

CHAPTER IV.

" Her duty is to stand and wait ;
In resignation to abide."

—WORDSWORTH.

ST. OMER, a pretty little town about twenty-six miles from Calais, was Mary's destination. Like a small Venice it stood surrounded by canals ; its suburbs lay in marshy waters ; and islands like meadows actually floated upon their surface. The inhabitants were a pious people, worthy of their motto — *Signum sanctæ crucis ;* for they had stood loyally to the true faith when menaced by the doctrines of Calvin. So well known in England was their staunch adherence to the creed of their fathers that English travellers were forbidden its precincts. James Howell wrote in 1618 to a friend : " I have got a warrant from the Lords of the Council to travel for three years anywhere— *Rome and St. Omer excepted.*" This was significant. A beautiful cathedral and magnificent Benedictine Abbey—the famous St. Bertin—adorned the town, and the monks and priests who trod its aisles and cloisters were worthy of its best traditions. Churches, convents, monasteries abounded. Within its walls was a place of pilgrimage to which people from the neighbourhood far and near came to ask for graces, spiritual and temporal. *Notre Dame des Miracles* the chapel was called, and often and often in after years Mary and her companions knelt before the statue of our Lady and told her all their needs.

But Mary's first visit now was not to Capuchins, nor Dominicans, nor even to our Lady, but to the "English Seminary," the house of the English Jesuits. To these Fathers she had letters of introduction from Father Holtby, and with them she was to treat "concerning the monasteries of the city."

Almost as soon as she landed, "before even the horses got to the stables," Mary presented herself at the English College. Her heart beat fast, for her future was to be decided there and then. In a few moments God's will was to be made known to her.

Whilst waiting in the porch for the Father whom she had asked to see, another Father passed her by. He introduced himself to her as Father George Keynes, and, finding out who she was, he immediately began to speak of the Convent of Poor Clares in the town. He praised their fervour and austerity, and told Mary that they were expecting her; they had a vacancy for just one out-Sister, and would be very glad to take her in that capacity. He strongly advised her to accept the offer, assuring her it was God's will in her regard.

Mary listened in silence. She felt an extreme repugnance to the proposal. But the words "the will of God" weighed heavily in the balance. The Poor Clares led an austere life, she knew. Had the out-Sisters the same rule? Would she have time for prayer and recollection?

By some mistake Father Keynes unhesitatingly assured her that the out-Sisters had exactly the same rule as the other religious. Indeed, they had additional spiritual advantages, he said, for a life of active charity was added to the austerity of the enclosed nuns. This answer might seem very

alluring, but it only shows how little either the Father who made the statement, or Mary, who believed it, knew of the Order of Poor Clares. Had they known more they would have seen that out-door begging and the Collettine Rule were absolutely incompatible.

Mary followed the advice. Her repugnance, which was so great that she said "it had been sweeter to have entered into a caldron of boiling oil," she supposed came from self-love, and, true to her habit of going against her inclinations, she set off to the Convent of Poor Clares and asked admission there. She was joyfully welcomed, and began her probation at once. But a great disappointment awaited her. The out-Sisters, she soon found, followed the Third Order of St. Francis, and had nothing whatever in common with the Poor Clares. There was no quiet contemplation for them, no long hours set aside for mental prayer and choir duty. Theirs was a holy life indeed, but devoted to hard labour, active deeds of charity, and constant occupation. Many ladies as refined as Mary Ward, as delicately brought up, have led lives equally trying to nature. But they had the vocation; and a vocation makes every state of life possible, easy, delightful. There was no vocation to support Mary during her year of trial. Yet she went through it bravely, and was clothed after her first month of probation. To crush her family pride, her natural reserve, the extreme delicacy of her senses, had been her aim at Babthorpe. God gave her now unsought-for opportunities for new victories. One word sums up these opportunities, the cold, hard word—*begging*. Mary's new life was begging. Upon her depended not only her own

support, but the support of a large community. They were fed if she was successful; they went hungry if she came back unloaded. Early every morning she set out with her basket and wallet to trudge through the town. Up one street she went, and down another, knocking at doors, begging from shop-keepers, begging from passers-by. When the town had been thoroughly tramped, she turned to the suburbs to visit the market gardeners; then to the open country, to call at farm-houses and peasant cottages. If by mid-day sufficient alms had not been collected, she got herself invited by some kind-hearted labourers, and sitting in the kitchen shared the family meal. Then throughout the afternoon she toiled on again, the baskets heavy now with the generous gifts of the poor. At last, when the sun set in the heavens and her day's work was done, she turned wearily home, too tired to sleep.

So in all weathers Mary made her rounds; sick or well, she made them. Once she was ill in bed with an abscess, but, thinking it was self-indulgent to lie quietly at home whilst others did her work, she got up, and with a poultice on her knee paced the streets as usual.

But Mary's vocation was not to be an out-Sister. God willed her elsewhere. Like a seedling that the gardener plants in a small place and transplants when it has outgrown its lodging, our Lord removed Mary from the Poor Clares. She had learnt in that year of humiliation what He wanted her to learn—self-distrust, a wide insight into the hearts of men, and experience of their ways. Now she was to take off the coarse habit of the novice out-Sister and take up again her position in the world. He

had a work for her to do, and, young as she was, she was fit to do it. She was to found a religious house for English ladies abroad. Of this foundation she gives us a characteristically short summary:

"It was the Feast of St. Gregory, my particular advocate. I was on a sudden enkindled with a vehement desire to procure a monastery for the English of this Order; but, not being able otherwise to moderate this vehemence and place myself in indifference before speaking or doing anything for that purpose, I retired myself alone, and earnestly entreated our Lord God that nothing that I might do in this business should have other success than that which He willed and which should be the most acceptable to Him, praying our most Blessed Lady and other saints to be witnesses that my desires were no other but to do and have done His Divine will."

And when by certain events God made His will clear,

"Putting on a secular dress, without further delay, I applied myself to procure a habitation and all else to found a monastery of St. Clare for the English. In that work, God knows, I did little; but His Divine Majesty supplied all my deficiencies in such a manner that, in the space of two years, a little more or less, a convenient site was found, a spacious monastery and church built, English nuns of that Order taken out of other monasteries to preside in it, and persons of fitting qualities and talents admitted on probation."

But all was not so smooth as this account would give us to suppose. There were many difficulties

to be overcome. The people of St. Omer resented, and naturally, the establishment of another convent dependent on alms in their town. Were there not religious Orders enough? they asked. And had not these generously opened their doors to all from over the seas who begged admittance? The answer to both questions was certainly Yes. There were Orders in plenty, and in many of these exiles had been kindly received. But English ladies found it hard to accustom themselves to a foreign manner of life, to foreign customs and coarse diet. They suffered much from ignorance of the language. Few confessors could speak any but their native tongue, and the Religious Superiors seldom knew more. Mary had felt all these inconveniences herself, and heartily sympathised with her countrywomen. Still, the townsfolk were right; they could not afford to keep another community, and the English could not justly lay claim to their alms. Such a difficulty as this Mary had her own way of solving. She sank the greater part of her dowry, and, collecting funds from her friends, secured the endowment of the convent. Thus opposition from one quarter was removed; but there remained much still to be done. Letters patent had to be procured from the Archduke Albert. Mary journeyed to Brussels, and spent six months in negotiating for these with His Highness. Then there were ecclesiastics of various degrees to be interviewed, civil authorities to be consulted; a site had to be chosen, the ground bought, the building begun, and—what was still more important—a rule obtained and a good Superior appointed. Calmly and perseveringly Mary saw to one particular after the other, and God

blessed her efforts more than any one could have dared to hope.

This monastery, situated at Gravelines, the port of St. Omer, became a glorious work, worth a lifetime of suffering and toil. The severest Rule of St. Clare extant in the Church was observed there. In little more than ten years from the date of the foundation the community numbered sixty-five religious. Later on, branch houses were established in Ireland, and in different parts of France and Spain. When the French Revolution broke out Mary Ward's Poor Clares of Gravelines left their adopted country, went to Haggerston Castle, Northumberland, then to Scorton, and finally settled at Clare Abbey, Darlington, where, by their prayers and good works, they are hastening the conversion of the country Mary loved so well.

It was in this convent of her own founding that Mary was next to be tried. For two years she had been transacting business of all kinds, mixing with people in every rank, spending herself in God's service. Now she was to "Come and rest a little." She was to pass some time in that seclusion which seemed to her then the ideal religious life. She, with eight other young English postulants, was clothed in the temporary monastery at St. Omer, where for five months she observed the rule and enjoyed an almost perfect peace. In her autobiography she writes:

"In that monastery they live with great strictness: they never eat meat even when ill; their food is poor in quality; and they never eat more than once a day, except on the day of the Nativity of our Lord. They sleep on straw mattresses;

instead of linen, rough, coarse cloth is worn ; what may be called continual silence is kept ; they rise at midnight, say the long Divine Office, and always make an hour of mental prayer after Matins before returning to rest. . . .

"The austerity and retirement were exceedingly to my content, and as far as I can remember nothing then could have disturbed me or given me cause of temptation, except to hear that there was some Order in the Church of God more austere and more secluded, in which two virtues I had, at least in theory, placed the whole of perfection."

And again : "I began to feel a great tranquillity of mind, often comforted to think that, after an eleven years' withholding and turbation, the rest of my days should be spent in quiet with God alone."

But repose was not for Mary. Our Lord's invitation was to "*Rest a little.*" She had had her rest, and was to set to work again, to suffer, and to wait. She says :

"Having passed four or five months in this place and at these exercises, and enjoying great peace of mind and interior consolation, I was sitting at work among the other nuns on the day of St. Athanasius, the second of May, about ten o'clock of the forenoon, being employed in making certain cords of St. Francis for the use of the religious, and reciting privately, as I was accustomed to do at each one that I made, the Litanies of our Most Blessed Lady, that whoever should wear that cord might never commit mortal sin, when there happened to me a thing of such nature that I know not, and never did know, how to explain.

It appeared wholly Divine, and came with such force that it annihilated and reduced me to nothing; my strength was extinguished, and there was no other operation in me but that which God caused. . . . The suffering was great, because the violence was so far beyond my powers, and the consolation was greater to see that God willed to make use of me in what pleased Him best. Here it was shown to me that I was not to be of the Order of St. Clare; some other thing I was to do, what, or of what nature I did not see, nor could I guess, only that it was to be a good thing, and what God willed."

Mary told her confessor, Father Roger Lee, of the light she had received, which "for my greater trial he appeared to disapprove and oppose with a certain severity not usual with him, exhorting me to a more than ever exact observance of the rules and regulations of the place where I was, which I did with very good will."

For seven months longer she remained on trial, faithfully observing every particular rule as if there were no prospect of a change. But God's will made itself felt.

"In those seven months I saw more and more that God did not desire this, though I remained entirely ignorant of that which His Divine Majesty willed from me; and, seeing that I had to return and live in the world, to prevent the deceits of the devil, and to dispose my soul entirely for the Divine service, on Palm Sunday (1609) I made a vow of chastity, with the leave and approval of the above-mentioned Father, and then took leave of these dear friends with much feeling on both sides."

In that year the new convent at Gravelines was finished, and Mary's young companions went at Easter to take possession, whilst their foundress remained at St. Omer. She says:

"The pain was great, but very endurable, because He Who laid on the burden also carried it. Notwithstanding I could believe that there is no suffering greater than the uncertainty as to the Divine will, to one who is resolved to seek above everything to serve God; but yet I would not have attained the knowledge of it at a less price."

So she took lodgings in the town, and put on a secular dress, "which was exactly modest, genteel, and becoming, often visiting those she had left, loving them as ever, most entirely dearly."

Through her foundation, Mary Ward had become an important person at St. Omer. The English Ambassador, Sir Thomas Edmondes, mentions her doings with some alarm to the Earl of Salisbury, Lord High Treasurer. To the townsfolk she had long been a prominent character, and they followed her proceedings with keen interest, believing, as most of us believe, that they had a right to judge their neighbours by their actions, which accordingly they did. When Mary carried out her plans of foundation successfully, they graciously praised her; when she generously endowed her convent, they praised her more graciously still. They openly admired her humility in entering as a simple novice, and they spoke in highly respectful terms of her as month after month she persevered.

But when she left the convent, put on a secular dress, and came amongst them once more, they did

not attempt to disguise their disgust. The epithets, "Runaway nun," "Visionary," "False prophetess," were flung at her as she passed through the streets. She was despised, condemned, misjudged.

Perhaps of all the lights Mary ever received this one of St. Athanasius' Eve cost her the most intense mental suffering. To renounce her quiet life was a great pain. "I loved what I possessed," she writes, "most sensibly and before all things that I knew, so much so that when I was the most left to my own nature and human defects, I wept to remember that I was not to be in that Order." To face the world again was another source of sorrow. For she was young, and alone in a strange country, with no superior to guide her; left without certain counsel even from her confessor. One thing only remained to her—the will of God. Yet here was her greatest trouble. She did not know the Divine will, she could not see her next step. The voice of the world shouting its contempt was scarcely heard. The sternness of her confessor in refusing direction was easily borne by one so humble. But the anxiety, the waiting to know the will of God, pressed heavily upon her. Twenty years later she spoke of this trial as greater by far than all the dangers, labours, and sufferings she had since undergone.

But Mary was not one to cross her hands and do nothing because darkness had fallen upon her. If the sun was gone down she would work in the twilight. Full of energy and zeal, she looked about to see what she could do for God's glory. And she was not long in coming to a decision. From over the water there came a loud cry for

help. Hundreds of souls in England were perishing. Children were growing up without instruction, people dying without the Sacraments, some outwardly conforming to the State religion to secure land and property to their descendants, others openly apostatising. Her heart bled for them.

St. Paul in a vision saw "a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying, 'Pass over into Macedonia and help us.'" And Paul, with his hands full of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, crossed the sea and helped the Macedonians. Mary was no bishop—she could not give the Holy Spirit; she was no priest—her hands were not consecrated; but, like St. Paul, she was an apostle in zeal and courage, and, like him, "she sought to go" across to help her brethren.

"I made a vow," she tells us, "to spend some months in England to do all the little I could for God, and the good of those there, not to be idle in the meantime, and the better prepared for whatever God should call me to."

To go to England, to London in particular, was a perilous enterprise, even for a man. Yet Mary seemed to have neither misgiving nor fear. She obtained Father Lee's consent, and set off a few weeks after Easter, 1609.

CHAPTER V.

"And now the whole land is a sheep astray
That bleats to God."—A. DE VERE.

LONDON! What a Babel it was, though not one-quarter the size it is now. Indeed, the whole of England then did not hold as many souls as the London of to-day. Yet it is doubtful whether it was not as noisy—certainly it was more unsafe.

Omnibuses, tramways, bicycles there were not, and no room for them either in the narrow streets; but there were the lumbering coaches of the rich; the jostling, shouting carriers of sedan-chairs; the farmers with their droves of bulls and sheep; showmen with half-tamed bears; the rude, rough mob of "rogues and masterless men"; apprentices whose chief business it seemed to be to find a quarrel or to make one, and then to fight it out in a systematic and orderly kind of way at street corners or other eligible places.

Outside their small booths or cellar-like dwellings stood the shop-keepers crying their wares, or reiterating at the top of their voices: "What d'ye please to lack, sir? What d'ye please to lack?"

Up and down the streets tramped the bellman, advertising sales, crying losses, summoning to funerals and weddings.

So much for the noise. Now for the safety—or, rather, the want of it. Some of the streets were so dark from the overhanging top-stories of the houses that there was never more than a dim

twilight even at noon. The roads were unpaved—damp and dirty in fine weather, with mud knee-deep in bad. Nor was a downpour of pure rain thought wetting enough. By an arrangement of the spouts the water was made to flow in streams upon the wayfarer and drenched him through.

There was little safety in a London street in the daytime ; after nine at night there was none at all. The watchman, with his cresset or horn lantern, and his halberd, paced the streets and told the passing hours ; but if he was able to protect himself he was sufficiently grateful, and left others to take care of themselves. Light there was none, except such as was carried by individuals. An escort with flaming torches showed that gay young courtiers were out, probably on mischief bent ; rioters from one tavern met with revellers from another, and they fell upon each other and came to blows, not from malice, but from want of sobriety. No wealthy occupant of a sedan-chair ever hoped to pass unchallenged through the midnight streets unless well surrounded with strong footmen. Some adventurers with masks would stop the carriers, thrust their daggs (pistols) through the window, and in a few but well-chosen words demand a surrender of all transferable property.

London had its sunny side, however. It stood in the midst of pretty villages, within scent and sight of the country. Herds of cattle grazed where Euston Station now stands. Covent Garden was surrounded by meadows. Hampstead and Highgate were reached by short stages, and were looked upon as distant summer resorts for the wealthy. Through the city flowed the Thames, silvery clear, carrying to its merchants rich cargoes—sugar and

gold from the West Indies, cotton from India, and silk from the East. Barges of all shapes and sizes took passengers and pleasure parties to Chelsea, Greenwich, and Gravesend—the last a long journey in those days, and not without its perils.

Somerset House, in the Strand, was the Court centre, and round it had sprung up the mansions of the nobles. Between Temple Bar and the Exchange dwelt the merchants in lofty houses, with parapeted fronts and stone facings. Whitefriars was the resort of rogues and bullies and scamps of all classes, who, if they had homes at all, huddled together in sheds and hovels there. To Hyde Park and Spring Gardens flocked the gentlemen and ladies for their afternoon or evening promenade.

Then there were places of refreshment—taverns and inns ill kept and dirty; places of amusement—bear gardens, where for one penny you witnessed a brutal scene: these Royalty attended, Elizabeth and James; theatres—not less than eighteen, in some of which Shakespeare's plays were being acted, *Pericles* perhaps, or *Troilus and Cressida.*

And London had its scenes of misery: prisons, a dozen and a half of them—dens of wretchedness and corruption; its whipping-posts—roughly counted, sixty—scattered about the city and its neighbourhood; its pillories; its gibbets, with the dead bodies swinging to and fro; its public buildings, such as the Tower and London Bridge, and these disfigured with the heads of dead men.

Did Father Roger Lee know London—its dangers for soul and body, the little hope there

was of doing good—that he gave his consent to Mary's going?

Father Roger Lee before entering the Society of Jesus had lived much in London. His high birth and winning manners had made him a great favourite with the nobility. He had lived in the most fashionable part, and had joined energetically in hawking and other gentlemanly sports then in vogue. But he was a fervent Catholic, and had come in for his share of persecution. Once, whilst making the Spiritual Exercises under Father Gerard, he narrowly escaped imprisonment. Father Gerard was taken, and Roger, like a good friend, constantly visited him in the "clink," brought him books and messages, and relieved him with food and clothing.

He knew London, therefore—its sunny and shady side—but he knew Mary too. He knew she would be safe where others perished, and that by her sanctity she would attract others to God. So he gave her his full consent and his blessing. And to London she came, without fear or anxiety.

Will any of us be surprised to find Mary Ward taking up her abode amongst the *élites* of the great city, "in St. Clement's Churchyard, in the Strand," and to see her put on the handsome secular clothing suited to her worldly rank? We must not be surprised. She had the best of reasons for her choice. Far less dangerous, far less open to suspicion, was the gay neighbourhood of the rich than the retired back quarters of the suburbs. Gaiety and "recusancy" were not supposed to go together, and the Court centre could hardly be suspected of harbouring "traitors."

As to her dress, Mary showed herself equally prudent. She was a born lady, and could most

naturally take her place amongst ladies. How could she assume for any length of time the dress and manners of the lower classes? The difference in social rank was much more marked then than now. Father Roger Lee, when he had to take off his cassock and hide his priesthood, put on the dress of a young sportsman—for such a part he could well sustain. He had been an athlete from boyhood, and was not likely to betray himself when talking of falcon-flying or tennis. Had he taken a pick-axe and shovel and the dress of a country Hodge, he would have been suspect at once. Mary, therefore, followed her confessor's example, and dressed as a lady of fashion.

There were other advantages in Mary's choice. The rich, perhaps more than the poor, had great temptations. With more to lose, their faith was more in danger. They needed help in a peculiar way, and she gave it to them without thought of self.

A description of her at this time, written by Winefrid Wigmore, whom we shall soon get to know, reminds one of Judith going to the tent of Holofernes.

Of Judith, Holy Scripture says: "She . . . clothed herself with the garments of her gladness, and put sandals on her feet, and took her bracelets, and lilies, and earlets, and rings, and adorned herself with all her ornaments. And the Lord also gave her more beauty; because all this dressing up did not proceed from sensuality, but from virtue; and therefore the Lord increased her beauty, so that she appeared to all men's eyes incomparably lovely."*

* Judith x. 3.

Winefrid says of Mary: "Still retaining her first extreme beauty, she went clothed as became her birth for matter and manners, and wore underneath a most sharp hair-cloth, which by continuance did eat into her flesh; nor did she omit her daily disciplines, oft fastings, and much very long watching. When it was for the good of her neighbour, what did she reserve to herself? Neither honour, life, nor liberty. When it best suited with present occasions, she put on servants' and mean women's clothes.

"No prison did she dread to visit, or danger to pass, to which she feared to expose herself, so as in some passages it was hard to say which virtue exceeded, her most innate modesty (which sometimes she was wont smilingly to say gave her trouble, she was so apt to blush) or courage had the upper hand, the one retiring her from all conversation, the other making her incapable of fears and apprehensions, or memory of her tenderness and beauty, or almost, one might say, her sex. As was visible in many occasions then and multitudes after, that God gave her an admirable power over wickedness in man or devil, and great protections in herself and by her to hers."

"A sight to do sore eyes good," people say when they see a thing of beauty. To the dim eyes of the prisoners Mary's bright, happy face must have been as balm. All through her life *joy* was one of her chief characteristics; it never escaped her altogether, even in times of grievous trouble and pain. She taught it to her spiritual children, and we shall find many traces of it in her life and letters.

"No prison did she dread to visit." To visit confessors of the Faith in prison might have been a matter of life and death; to breathe the sickening air of the miserable cells was hardly less dangerous. Courage was needed—fortitude rather—prudence too, and immense charity.

There are few details of Mary's visit to England in 1609. Nor is it surprising, considering the times. Catholic affairs in the reign of James I. had to be treated with the greatest secrecy, for any moment papers, documents, books were liable to be pounced upon and carried off by the the Government spies. To write the name of a priest, a convent, a house where Mass had been said, was enough to bring those concerned within the pale of the law. Still, some few particulars have been handed down to us.

Once, at Coldham Hall,* when on a visit to her friends the Rookwoods, she heard of a rich yeoman's wife who was very ill. Many learned priests and many good people had visited her in hopes of bringing her to the true faith. But she had obstinately refused to have anything to do with them. Mary went to her bedside, showed much sympathy with her suffering state, and, putting her hand on her head, spoke to her in "her wonted mild, sweet manner." The poor woman resisted no longer. "I will be a Roman Catholic," she said, "and confess now, now." She did confess, and with such humility and contrition that her confessor was astonished.

There was a near relative of the Wards—a Miss

* Coldham Hall, in Suffolk, is still in good preservation. It was built in 1576 by Robert Rookwood.

Grey—who was a heretic. Mary did not know her personally, but she longed to do something for her soul. How could she best get at her, was her one thought. Relatives, she knew, stand little chance of success in such delicate matters. She would go as a stranger. So she put on her own maid's dress and took her position as a servant in the Protestant household. By degrees she won the confidence of Miss Grey, and ventured to speak of religion. Her success was perfect. A meeting with a Jesuit Father was secretly arranged, she was instructed, and became a solidly good Catholic.

Two Calvinist ministers, zealous preachers of heresy, were brought into contact with Mary. She stood her ground so firmly and argued so clearly that they were both converted, and did as much for truth as they had hitherto done for error.

One of Mary's early biographers, Vincentio Pageti, says: "She laboured day and night in seeking to gain souls, despising danger either to life or honour." To some of us it may seem rash that Mary should have risked "life and honour" in a town like London. But a beautiful saying of her own shows us why she was so daring: "God is not wanting to good wills, and it gives Him pleasure that we should trust Him, when He gives us light to know that He trusts us." Besides, sixty picked men could not have protected her as did her own purity of heart. There is no body-guard like it. It shines in the face and disarms evil; it awakens virtuous feelings even in hearts where virtue has long been sleeping. We see its charm nowadays, even in this London of ours. It is not the blue serge and white linen of a Sister of Charity that enables her to thread her way through

the slums of the East End, but the holiness of life that is associated in the minds even of the wicked with that religious habit. Without a habit, Mary's sanctity beamed in her face and won others to her side. We read: "Amongst others that were reduced from bad life one was as famous for her birth as enormous for her crime. This party would say she [Mary Ward] had a bewitching power to draw one from herself, and put them where she would and they ought to be."

Again: "Divers were withdrawn from libertine lives, others put out of occasions, and many that desired to be religious, and had not the means, were holpen and disposed so as they attained the effects. She assisted so many towards their being religious, as herself did not so much as know the persons, when by occasion of seeing her they acknowledge the grace of being religious to have come by her means."

In this way Mary laboured in England with all the earnestness of her nature, and God blessed her labours—they were so much His own. As far as her vocation was concerned she was still in the dark, but what did that matter? She was being prepared for God's work, and others were prepared for hers. She mixed with the world, met choice souls, and instinctively drew them to a higher life. She told them of the land she had come from, where there was peace, plenty, and religion; where the beautiful chimes of cathedral bells rang out the *Angelus* and called the multitude to Mass and sermon and public prayer. No wonder that those who lived in a deserted land, famished for want of the Sacraments, were stirred when they heard

her speak, and longed "to enjoy the good things of the Lord in the land of the living," and that chosen souls amongst them gathered into a little band around her, ready to follow her wherever she went.

But a greater good even than this Mary got from her stay in England—one that was to bring greater glory to God. There was a time in her life, not so many months back, when she thought, with the generality of people, that "women did not know how to do good except to themselves"—"a penuriousness which I resented," she says. Now she found that with God's grace women could help their neighbours with good works as well as by prayer and mortification. And this experience was to her like a new and enlarged horizon, a widening of the thoughts and hopes of her life. It was indeed the first sight of her true vocation.

Before leaving St. Omer she had made a vow to her confessor to enter on her return the Order of St. Teresa, if such was his wish. But even then she felt no attraction towards the Carmelite Rule. Now, at the end of her stay in England, she felt still less. And a supernatural favour was granted to her one day that made her see more plainly than ever that God had other designs for her.

"One morning," she says, "making my meditation coldly and not at all to my satisfaction, at the end of it I resolved to assist a person to be accepted in some convent who much desired to become a nun, but, wanting a portion, could not otherwise enter one; and then going to dress myself according to the fashion of the country and other circumstances, whilst I adorned my head at

the mirror, something very supernatural befell me, similar to that already related on the day of St. Athanasius, but more singular, and, as it appears to me, with greater impetuosity, if greater there could be. I was abstracted out of my whole being, and it was shown to me with clearness and inexpressible certainty that I was not to be of the Order of St. Teresa, but that some other thing was determined for me, without all comparison more to the glory of God than my entrance into that holy religion would be. I did not see what the assured good thing would be, but the glory of God which was to come through it, showed itself inexplicably and so abundantly as to fill my soul in such a way that I remained for a good space without feeling or hearing anything but the sound, 'Glory, glory, glory.' By accident I was then alone, therefore what external changes this and similar things cause I cannot say, but from the internal feeling and bodily disturbance they must be remarkable; my knowledge fails as to their continuance; all appears to last but a moment, even at those times when afterwards I made a computation of time, and found it to have been about two hours.

"On this occasion a good space of time passed before I recovered; but, returned to myself, and finding my heart full of love for this thing, accompanied by such glory that not yet can I comprehend what it was, and seeing for certain that I was not to be of the Order of St. Teresa, remembering also the vow that I had made of being of that Order if my confessor should command me, I felt great fear of offending God in these two contraries, or of adhering to one or the other side; to resist

that which now had been operated in me I could not, and to have a will in opposition to the vow I ought not. In this conflict, giving myself to prayer, I protested to God, so liberal, that I had not and would not admit on this occasion any other will than His, and, as a testimony and sign that my mind and will were totally to do His without exception, I put on a hair-cloth, which I have forgotten for how long a time I wore, but I believe for some continuance, for I well recollect that through this and other corporal penances, done for this end during the months that I remained in England, I did no little injury to my health, especially being occupied at that time with some fervour in winning and aiding others."

Whilst the ecstasy lasted Mary was full of love for this "assured good thing" which was to bring so much glory to God. But the infused light died away and she was left in darkness and sadness. All definite hope seemed to be taken from her. She was not to be of the Order of St. Teresa—that was plain. But nothing in particular was proposed to her instead, which she tells us "seemed somewhat hard." She was accustomed to hard things, however, and she set herself bravely to bear her trouble.

It was whilst still in this uncertainty as to her future that one by one her young friends gathered round her. They came unexpectedly, uninvited. Their coming formed no part of a plan in her mind. But they were corner-stones in God's eternal plan. They were souls of His own choosing, who, with her, were to bring about that "great glory to God." We must get to know them.

In Gloucestershire, about nine miles from Bristol, stands Iron Acton, then the residence of Edward Poyntz, whose ancestors had landed in England with William the Conqueror. He and his brother Sir John are described in an official document of the times as being guilty of keeping Jesuits in their house and being "altogether Jesuited." This short description was probably enough for the Privy Council. It is enough for us also. "Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee who thou art."

Edward Poyntz was related to Mary, and had invited her to Tobington Park, one of his estates. One day, early in the morning, she was walking with him in the stiff old pleasure-garden. At a window overlooking the lawn stood a lovely girl of sixteen, Mary Poyntz, his daughter. She watched Mary intently for some time, and then exclaimed in a transport of joy: "See, there she is, through whose instructions God will save me." The child's resolution was taken: she would follow Mary across the sea, live with her always, and learn from her how to serve God in religion.

Her father, a marked man, whose property, and life even, were in jeopardy, very willingly confided his daughter to Mary's care. But there was another whose consent was needed.

A young cavalier, whose name we do not know, had long loved Mary Poyntz. He was of a noble house, very rich, the last of his family. "But she, having seen our foundress, and been so wonderfully enlightened and called to a religious life, bereft this cavalier . . . of all hope of ever obtaining her hand, and, I believe, in order to free herself from him, she revealed to him her resolution of becoming a religious. He then solicited her to give him her

portrait. She positively refused at first, but at length she promised, and had this well-known picture painted. One part of the face was her living likeness, with a fine perfect eye which exactly resembled hers. From the cheek down to the chest she was pale and emaciated, like a dying person. The upper part on the other side was painted like a death's head, a skull, and from the cheek down to the chest the flesh was quite corrupted and eaten by worms. This likeness* of herself she gave him, and it made such an impression upon his mind that he forsook all and entered a religious Order."

And so Mary Poyntz joined herself to her namesake, the first of many children who were to learn from her a new way of life.

Next comes Winefrid Wigmore, a cousin of Mary Poyntz. She was the same age as Mary Ward, and it is her loving pen that gives us details of Mary's after-life. Of all her devoted friends Winefrid was perhaps the dearest. From childhood she had been called "the little saint," and her companions used to stop any unbecoming word when they saw her coming, for fear of giving her pain. She was highly educated, and could speak five languages fluently. Many a burden did she lift from Mary's shoulders by her tact, humility, and great ability.

Then there was Jane Browne, daughter of Sir George Browne, of Shefford, in Berkshire. He was a staunch Catholic, and brought up his children in the true faith. She was the eldest of Mary's little party—twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old.

Of Catherine Smith little is known ; but an old obituary notice states that she was humble and

* This portrait is preserved at Nymphenburg, at the Convent of the English Institute.

virtuous, endowed with immovable courage even in hunger and thirst and necessity.

Susanna Rookwood met Mary at Coldham Hall, the seat of her family. She was probably a cousin of the unfortunate Ambrose Rookwood, who was tried and condemned for his share in the Gunpowder Plot. She was an ardent soul, full of fervour. Nothing daunted her; she braved danger and difficulty and suffering when God's honour was at stake, or the good of her neighbour.

Now we come to Barbara Babthorpe, the child who listened to the old woman's stories in the sewing-room at Babthorpe Hall. Her father, the stately baron, died a poor old man in a foreign country, with scarcely a servant to close his eyes. Money, houses, land, all were given up for his faith; but that was left to him, and it was whilst making the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius that God took him to Himself.

Barbara was only seventeen when she joined Mary Ward. No pains had been spared on her education, and what was still wanting to her, Mary, like a second mother, supplied. She became a brilliant member of the Institute, and was named by Mary, on her death-bed, her successor as head of the little surviving family.

The last on our list is another Barbara, Mary's own sister. With the exception of this sister, little is known of Mary's relations. She scarcely mentions them in her writings; but of Barbara she says she was all "that could be desired in a sister, in a friend, and in a subject." From another source we learn that Barbara was "one of profound judgment, singular wit, and great resolutions in any business whatsoever, though never so full of impossibilities;

and her invincible courage so great that her voice, presence, and countenance were sufficient to have animated the most fearful or tepidest heart in the world." There is a likeness to Mary here.

These were the beautiful souls who gave themselves up to Mary Ward.

> These *sev'n* are mine,
> Whom to this service I commend ;
> Which way soe'er our fate incline,
> These will be faithful to the end ;
> They are my all.*

Perhaps there never was an instance of more perfect confidence than that shown by these seven first companions. The Mother in whom they trusted was only twenty-four years of age. She was leaving home and country for a foreign land, far away from friends and relations ; she was going to lead a life of perfection, to spend herself for the good of her neighbour in whatever way God should point out to her. For the present she did not know that way for herself, much less was she able to point it out to them. But their brave young hearts never wavered. They trusted her blindly, for they saw she was worthy of their trust. With her they would bear the anxious doubt and time of suspense, and join with her in fervent prayer and practices of penance to win the light of the Holy Spirit. And as for hardships and trials and sorrows, these could not daunt them. From childhood they had seen labours and sufferings and death endured for the good cause. They were children of a persecuted religion, and they had in them the stuff of which martyrs are made.

* Wordsworth.

MARY AND HER FIRST COMPANIONS.

THEY CROSS OVER TO ST. OMER IN 1609.

To face p. 68.

CHAPTER VI.

"In sanctity
Were her foundations laid."—A. DE VERE.

MARY WARD made a home for her children at St. Omer, across the water; and a holy home it was.

"Their course of life," says Father Lohner, S.J., "was the epitome or model of the choicest virtues and perfections; every hour was regularly divided, and each appointed to certain employments, and not a moment of time was wasted. All was turned, as far as possible, to the honour and service of God. She and her companions took food but once a day, lying only upon straw beds, and undertook penances and mortifications besides.

"Their dwelling appeared much rather to be the dwelling of virtues than of man. A continual self-renunciation, a humble knowledge and acknowledgment of their own faults, simple obedience and subjection of their own will and understanding, interior recollection and love of silence, exterior modesty of speech and demeanour, were to be seen there. All these and many other virtues shone forth so clearly in all their practices, that those who did not know them before might think they had entered the religious state many years previously, and that it was after their protracted exercise that they had reached to so eminent a degree. . . . The Holy Spirit of God entirely possessed the house as His own, and richly endowed it with heavenly love."

Another old record of the time says :

"Amongst other goods which they did the public, a chief one, and one of the most useful to their neighbours, was to employ themselves in the education of youth, not only those of our nation (of which there were very many), but also those of the places where they lived, who were taught gratis the sciences fitting our sex, and all that became good Christians and worthy women. The English in regard of the distance, lived wholly under their care, tabled, etc., and were taught qualities to render them capable and fit to do God service, in whatsoever state, religious or secular; and through God's mercies the effects have very happily followed in all our English monasteries, and diverse in married state."

And Jean Hendrico, a chronicler of the time, in his "Recueil Historique," sums up in a few lines the twofold end of their life :

"Elles enseignent les filettes à lire, écrire et coudre pour l'honneur de Dieu. Elles vivent aussi sur quelque forme de vie monastique, s'exerçant en toutes sortes d'austerité et macération de corps, combien qu'elles fussent des corps délicates et belles en perfection comme anglaises."

This twofold end—religious perfection and the education of children—was Mary Ward's ideal from the beginning. But religious perfection first. She and her companions should be holy if they were to be God's instruments in the work for souls. Hence, with an energy and earnestness of purpose which was the most striking of her characteristics, she and hers practised constant mortification,

worked hard, and devoted hours to vocal and mental prayer. With them there were no half-measures, no weak attempts at a semi-religious life. Theirs was a thorough-going, strong-willed aiming at perfection.

These characteristics come out strongly in the order of day observed in the house :

"The usual order of day," says Father Lohner, "is this : At four o'clock in the morning they are awoke, and at half-past four they meditate for an hour ; the rest of the time until eight o'clock is spent in hearing Mass, vocal prayers, and spiritual reading ; then they go to their business in the house or their office, and remain thus until a quarter to ten, at which time the examen of conscience is performed for a quarter of an hour, and afterwards they go immediately to dinner. When dinner is ended a liberal recreation is granted until half-past twelve, after which half an hour is again passed in spiritual reading, and then they betake themselves to their several duties in the house and their offices until five o'clock, from which time until six they apply themselves to vocal prayer. At six o'clock follow supper and recreation until eight, then they say together the Litanies of our Lady and the Saints and whatever the Superioress enjoins, after which examen is made for a quarter of an hour, the points of meditation on the following day are read aloud, and the usual night's rest is taken."

Mary's love of God, however, was too strong to be kept for herself and her Sisters alone. She felt a craving to enkindle in other souls the love which burnt in her own. "I will turn my hand to

the little ones,"* was her resolve, and the children of the rich and poor alike should come to her and learn how best to save their souls.

To us it seems common-place enough to teach "les filettes à lire, écrire et coudre pour l'honneur de Dieu," but in the beginning of the seventeenth century it was an almost unheard-of thing for religious or pious women of any kind to have schools or teach young girls. *Almost* unheard of, for a few years previously a pious congregation had been formed in the South of France for the education of children. The Rules of St. Ignatius had been adapted to the use of its members. The Ursulines, too, had some large educational establishments in France, where they were doing successful work. But these places of education were little accessible to the general public. For in all convents of the time Papal enclosure was strictly observed, according to which a child entering a convent as a pupil became for the time of its stay as bound to enclosure as the nuns themselves. Thus day schools were impossible, and comparatively few parents were able or willing to send their children away, as it were, for good. Under the circumstances the daughters of the wealthy usually stayed at home, and were either wholly occupied with household duties, like their grandmothers, or taught, according to the latest fashion, Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew. The children of the poor, if they learnt anything, learned it at their mother's knee. But systematic training there was little or none.

Mary perceived the needs of the time. Although

* Zach. xiii.

so young, she had had a large experience, and she saw that things were not with the world as they had been. A craving to know was spreading far and wide. Doctrines once received with childlike faith were questioned, criticised, brought to the bar of human reason.* Bitter controversy was the result; and, while the faith of many gave way, the charity of all engaged was dulled and devotion chilled. Then the revival of the "learned languages" flooded society with Pagan literature. With Greek refinement came Greek licentiousness. Even the seminaries were not free from the classical craze. The priestly ear became so nice that the Latin of the Breviary offended it. The Vulgate was so barbarous that the Gospels were laid aside, and models of virtue sought in the Pagan poetry of the ancient Latins and Greeks. Scepticism was frightfully common amongst men of letters. It is so much easier to deny than to prove; and to a man puffed up with new learning, to believe without proving was ridiculous.

Under these circumstances women, on whom the future so greatly depended, plainly needed better instruction, a more solid training in virtue, a yet firmer groundwork of religion, than in times of simpler faith. But where was this to be done? In the greater number of families, even in Catholic countries, such a training was difficult; in England it was impossible. Mary felt urged to put her hand to the work. At one time of her life she had thought contemplation the highest good; now she saw dimly, yet undoubtedly, that God wanted active service from her. How was she to set about

* "Christian Schools and Scholars." Drane.

so huge a task? There were difficulties in the way which seemed insurmountable.

As long as she and her companions were content to be secular ladies, banded together for good and living in common, all was easy enough. But such was not Mary's goal. Her ideal was a society of religious women, sanctioned by the Holy See, with an approved rule, devoted to the training of children of their own sex, as well as to their own perfection. And here was the difficulty. In all Orders Papal enclosure, as we have seen, was binding, and a religious habit obligatory; and these two restrictions would alone put such a restraint upon her labours as to render them unavailing. On the other hand, she knew that a community cannot long exist without a rule, nor flourish without the approbation of the Holy See. Would the Holy See approve of a scheme such as she proposed? There seemed no likelihood of it. She waited, therefore, for God to show her His will. "I will give thee understanding, and I will instruct thee in this way, in which thou shalt go,"* was His promise to His people of old, and she knew it was true of all times and persons.

Three years passed, and Mary Ward's work at St. Omer proved successful. Her schools had become popular, for they were free to all classes. Every day troops of children were seen coming up the Grosse Rue (now Rue Carnot) and passing into the large house to learn about God and holy things. Some of these children were sturdy young peasants from the suburbs; others

* Ps. xxxi.

were from the town; others, again, demure little English exiles, looking, notwithstanding their baby faces, like miniature women in their long frocks and close-fitting caps.

The community, at first only six in number, had increased so much that the Archduchess Isabella, ever a kind friend of Mary's, gave them the house adjoining their own. The old record says:

"Many other ladies of good birth and position, incited by their edifying way of life, earnestly desired to be received into their company, to Mary's no little joy and consolation." "Her example and form of living, and the fame of her holy life, drew many others, and those of the best sort and most qualified," adds Winefrid, ever ready to give all the credit to her superior.

Naturally, such expansion and zeal did not escape notice. Numbers of religious Orders and ecclesiastics watched the enterprising foreigners with interest, and wished them well. It was Mary's nature to make friends, and she had many at St. Omer. We shall see a little later how kind a father Bishop Blaise proved himself. From the first he had allowed the Blessed Sacrament to be reserved in the house, had appointed the English Fathers of the Society the confessors of the community, and provided a good priest to look after their sick and dying. The Abbot of St. Bertin was Mary's devoted helper; and the Jesuit Fathers, particularly Father Roger Lee, were ready to assist her in every way in their power.

Yet these were precisely the friends who added to Mary's mental suffering at this time. For, though they were able to see clearly the need of an approved rule, they could not see why she hesitated

to adopt any one of the many rules approved by the Holy See, which could, they thought, be adapted to the special wants of her community.

"Great instance," she says, "was made by divers spiritual and learned men that we would take upon us some rule already confirmed. Several rules were procured by our friends both from Italy and France, and we earnestly urged to make choice of some of them. They seemed not that which God would have done, and the refusal of them caused much persecutions, and the more because I denied all, and could not say what in particular I desired or found myself called to."

These "spiritual and learned men" could only see the instability and inevitable troubles that must come where no rule sanctioned by the Holy See is observed. They did not understand that Mary was being led by God Himself, and that His time for speaking had not yet come.

His time was near at hand, though—nearer than Mary imagined. And like many other great blessings it came with a cross. Sickness—small-pox, one biographer says—broke out in the town, and the English household had its victims. The children were attacked, but with the good nursing they received were soon on their feet again. Very different was the case with Mary. One morning the rumour spread that she was ill. The disease made rapid progress; the Last Sacraments were administered, and hope was almost gone. The community was inconsolable. What would become of them without their Mother and guide? Could God be going to take her away before her work was well begun? They made a vow to our Lady of Montaigu, to make a pilgrimage on foot

to her shrine if she recovered. She did recover, and very joyously the vow was kept, though it involved no small amount of danger on the pilgrims, whose road through Flanders and Brabant was beset by brutal soldiers and freebooters.

In the midst of this sickness, when Mary was still weak and exhausted, the light as to her future foundation came. We have the account in her own words:

"About that time, in the year 1611, I fell sick in great extremity. Being somewhat recovered (by a vow made to send in pilgrimage to our Blessed Lady of Sichem), being alone, in some extraordinary repose of mind, I heard distinctly, not by sound of voice, but intellectually understood, these words, '*Take the same of the Society.*' So understood as that we were to take the same both in matter and manner, that only excepted which God by diversity of sex hath prohibited. These few words gave so great measure of light in that particular Institute, comfort, and strength, and changed so the whole soul, as that it is impossible for me to doubt but that they came from Him, Whose words are works."

Some years later, writing to Father Gerard,* she says:

"What I had from God touching this, was as follows (understood as it is writ, without adding or altering one syllable): 'Take the same of the Society. Father General will never permit it. Go to him.' These are the words whose worth cannot

* The renowned Jesuit Confessor of the Faith.

be valued, nor the good they contain too dearly bought; these gave sight where there was none, made known what God would have done, gave strength to suffer, what since hath happened, assurance of what is wished for in time to come."

From that day forward Mary felt her way was clear. Not a doubt ever again crossed her mind that the inspiration she had received was from God. It was like the Labarum of Constantine—a standard for battle, a sign to be fought against, but one that in the end would conquer. In the meanwhile it gave her joy and peace and supernatural courage. All suspense was over, all anxiety as to God's will. Never again was there that dark groping, painful doubting as to her duty. Trials and waiting; persecution, opposition, and failure—all these came, but doubt as to God's will regarding her Institute —never.

If the nature of Mary's spirit needed proof, the test would be found in her heroic submission and patience, her perfect obedience to her confessor, even when his direction seemed to be completely opposed to the light she had received.

"For she well knew God could not be against Himself," says Winefrid Wigmore, "and that it was no abuse of His grace which she received, but to use for His service, for the glory of the Giver to leave for His will. After so many years of penance and anxiety to know God's will, when known with such assurance and clarity, as never more to doubt in herself, in such a manner as she would oft tell us, and even to her last days, that 'all was to her as already done,' and that 'as oft as she opened her eyes, she did as it were sensibly, visibly see it';—notwithstanding all this, her con-

fessor commanding her to lay aside both her thoughts and her Institute, which she did without delay."

And not only without delay, but with such strength of soul that she could attend to all her affairs with perfect exactness. She was

"Whole in her petitions, and whole and without reserve in her resignation, whole employing all the strength she had in her labours, whole to herself, and whole to her neighbours, great in her faith and her confidence in God, and faithful in her search to know all that God would of and by her."

Not only did Father Lee at this time refuse to countenance Mary's plan to "take the same as the Society," but, as she sadly wrote to the Nuncio Albergati, when referring to the days of trial, "all the Society opposed." And Winefrid adds:

"Certain religious men by her dearly loved and respected, misliked, and to a strange degree made violent opposition to what to her was so dear, and on the other hand, the will of God being so dear to her, that after having at length known it, she could not endure the least mixture or change, not to please or gain thousands of worlds; nor could the neglect of it be a less crime in her than the reproach she would have justly merited of being unfaithful and treacherous and disloyal."

But her friends could not see things in this light. Let her take a rule that has been approved by the Church, they said, that has been tried and proved possible. Why should she want to innovate? Hundreds of women had found their perfection in existing Orders. Why should not

she and her companions? But Mary's meek answer was, "they seemed not that which God would have done."

That amongst these opposers were some of the Jesuit Fathers need surprise no one. With enemies in many quarters, it is natural that the Society should have declined to make itself responsible for a scheme not only novel, daring in the extreme, but repugnant to Catholic habits of mind two hundred years ago.

How repugnant and how daring, it would be hard for us living in the nineteenth century to imagine. Religious houses of women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were "gardens enclosed" in the literal sense of the word. The white cornette had not yet been seen on the battlefield. Nuns had not stood by the bedside of the dying, nor visited the slums of crowded cities. Silence and contemplation and retirement—these alone were held to be the virtues for religious women. The sanctification, by prayer and penance, of their own souls and of the souls of others—this was thought to be their sole means of glorifying God. Worthy means they were, and all-sufficing for those who were called to walk in the ways of a hidden life. But the world was changing. Men and women were leaving the beaten tracks and seeking new ones. God was about to send out new messengers to seek after the lost ones, to soothe and win and bring back those who had gone astray.

It was no wonder, then, that even the best of God's servants were alarmed at such a prospect. Was the license-loving spirit of Protestantism going to invade the Church? Were the spouses of

Christ to be allowed to come and go amongst men without safeguards? Prudence and caution were required in encouraging, or even countenancing, such a scheme. Prudent as ever, cautious as ever, the Jesuits held back, and left Mary and her children to work out their views alone. As the plan of the Institute became more defined, the intention more public, the Society withdrew still more from all responsibility. In the early days, however, before restrictions had been issued from the General of the Society, some of the Fathers were Mary's ablest advisers. Like her, they saw the necessities of the Church, and thought, with her, that such an Institute would meet some of its most urgent needs.

And the time came when Father Roger Lee, having fully tested Mary's spirit, left her every possible freedom to develop her plans. He took the warmest interest in all her proceedings, and personally directed and encouraged her and her companions. Once, in 1612, when Mary was ill, he came to see the community. They were down-hearted and anxious about their suffering Mother. It was New Year's Day. Assembling them all in the chapel, he addressed them with quaint cheerfulness. "You see," he said, "our Saviour this day offers His precious blood to be shed for us; therefore pull up your spirits in Almighty God, to go forwards with more vigour in your good purposes."

A little later he got a Superior named to help Mary in her hard task of government; she was too weak, he said, to take the whole care upon herself. He thus announces the change:

"Now, children, you see that it is necessary for God's honour, that your Superior seek some means to get her health; and as she hath care of you all hitherto and hath given you all satisfaction, so now it is thought fit, to the end that her care may in some sort be lessened, that another be chosen your Superior amongst you. . . . Sister Barbara Babthorpe is to be Superior, and nevertheless to have a particular care over you in the novice-ship."

About this time the good Father, himself out of health, was, to the grief of all, sent away for change of air. Yet even at a distance he watched over his little flock, sending them written exhortations when he could no longer speak to them. He kept himself informed of all that happened at St. Omer; rejoiced when the news was good, sympathised when it was bad; and when troubles in the community arose, did not fail to urge them to persevere in their way of life. They sorely needed encouragement. It was hard to lead the life of religious and to be denied the name, to hear the tongues of busybodies carping at their way of life, and to bear the opposition of good and learned men.

Once, during one of Mary's frequent absences, Father Lee wrote a long letter to her forlorn children, in which he tells them they are not to mind what others say as long as their own good Bishop has so high an opinion of them. Winding up his letter, he says:

"And withal I told him that there were some of you to be bishopped [confirmed], entreating his Lordship would please to appoint that his chaplain

might take order that they might come some day; and he answered, his chaplain should not need to take order, for that he himself would come down and celebrate, and he would appoint the day himself, which I think will be some day in Christmas holidays.

"Thus you see how principal persons do esteem and approve your course, and I tell you this to the end that you may proceed more solidly, and that whatsoever doth happen or may be said by such as have little knowledge of your state, let it never trouble you. . . . I commend these three virtues to you in all your proceedings: first, humility, not to prefer yourselves in your speeches; second, prudence and resolution in answering; . . . third, seek still to have confidence in Almighty God. . . .

"Let us go forward like good children, and let us do all with love, and let your hands never be idle, but seek still to go forward in the progress of virtue."

CHAPTER VII.

"O Lord, give good success."—*Ps.* cxviii. 141.

WE have mentioned Mary's absences from St. Omer. Since her visit in 1609 she and some chosen companions had made occasional journeys to England. Sometimes they went on necessary private business, sometimes on business for the congregation, always with the primary intention of helping to their utmost wavering souls or those lost to the Faith. In 1614 Mary had once more been brought to death's door by a sort of lingering consumption. Of this disease she was miraculously cured by the application of a relic of "Blessed Ignatius." But so weak was she, that it was thought only her native air could restore her strength. To London, therefore, she went, but with other views than seeking health.

"Finding it much for God's service to have a residence of ours there"—that is, in London—Winefrid tells us, Mary took a house, probably in Spitalfields, then a quiet suburb, close to the residences of the Flemish and Venetian Ambassadors—near, consequently, to chapels where Mass could be heard and the Sacraments frequented. Once in London, amidst the scene of her old labours, Mary, forgetting she was an invalid, set to work vigorously. Winefrid Wigmore, who acted on this occasion as nurse, says:

"Occasions presented for the service of God and

good of her neighbour. She refused none, neither could any want what was in her power, were it spiritual or corporal; neither did she dispute why this or that person, or this or that place; her only why and what was that God's honour were advanced and souls gained to Him. . . . She was laden with these holy labours, so as to have scarce time to eat or sleep."

"Her family [in London] was living so religiously, as the perfecter sort avouched they found the same as in their own colleges and houses in Catholic countries. The bountifulness and largeness of her heart was so well tempered and conjoined with her religious poverty, as a certain very knowing and curious person, after a long observance and exact observation of her house, made this expression: 'There was none wanted, nor anything wasted, no, not so much as a piece of bread,' and that 'the comportment of hers to one another was like most dear and discreet friends that had been long absent and did then meet. . . .

"She kept constantly two [priests] in her house, to the end her family might not want due assistance, and the other be free to help such as should need go abroad, especially the poor, to whom priests could not get but with great danger and by night, not having justifiable pretexts as to those of quality they have, their houses being frequented by all sorts."

The testimony of the Jesuit, Father Adam Contzen, Rector at Munich, was brief but to the point: "She sheltered and supported our Fathers in England."

So severe, however, were the laws, that many

timid Catholics shrank from taking advantage of the assistance of the priests. The risk seemed too great.

"To remedy this want, our dearest Mother employed herself and hers, sometimes disguised, and sometimes in her own clothes, using sometimes familiar conversation, other times authority; amongst the common and poor sort would first put them in doubt of their own error, and then lay the light before them. When it took, they instructed them how to make good confessions, and so prepared them as the priests had but to hear their confessions, and so avoid the danger which a long stay would have brought them, and they also have more time to employ in such functions as alone belong to their character. God so blessed these her endeavours, as many, and persons of note, both for the quality of their birth and malice and perverseness of their heresy, were converted."

Tried virtue, great courage, and piety were necessary to those who were sent on the English mission. We only know the name of one of these at this time—Susanna Rookwood. But if her companions were like her, they were ancestors the Institute might well be proud of.

"She [Susanna Rookwood] was very often in danger of her life for the Catholic faith, to which she brought back a large number of souls, and preserved and strengthened many others. She was five times in prison for her religion, where she encouraged and refreshed the other prisoners both by spiritual and temporal means. At last she was thrown into a horrible dungeon, or rather hole,

where she had to defend and preserve herself with a stick from the mice, rats, and other vermin which infested it. Here she had to remain a considerable time, but was at last set free."

A proof of a higher kind of courage is given of this noble woman. One of her converts was taken ill. Susanna nursed her lovingly, and procured the Last Sacraments for her. After receiving Holy Communion the invalid vomited, and "it was supposed that the Sacramental Species might still be present incorrupt, upon which Susanna took courage and magnanimously swallowed all her sick person had brought up."

Thus the years 1614 and 1615 passed. In St. Omer Mary's companions were fighting against idle tongues and doing their work bravely for God, and to them Mary came back in 1616.

Her object in returning was to undertake a great work—the drawing up of a Memorial of her projected Institute. Father Roger Lee had long urged her to take this step, feeling how important it was to secure the blessing of the Holy See upon a work which promised a rapid growth. Besides, too, the holy man looked forward to a time when he would no longer be able to help Mary Ward and her companions. Consumption was wasting his frame, and he must have known that his days were numbered.

Under his direction Mary went into retreat. She wanted light and grace, new strength for new battles, more patience for more trials and more waiting.

God was very good to her in this retreat, and steeped her soul in consolation. One day He gave her a vision of a perfect soul, who in every way

was fitted for the work He intended her children to do. The sight was a wonderful help to her in her plans. She writes the following account to Father Lee:

"Dearest Father,

"I would exceedingly gladly, both for my better satisfaction and greater security, acquaint you with what hath occurred in these two days, especially that which I yesterday wrote to your Reverence about, and am now going to set it down. . . . It seems a certain clear and perfect estate, to be had in this life, and such an one as is altogether needful for those that should well discharge the duties of this Institute. I never read of any I can compare with in likeness to it. It is not like the state of the saints, whose holiness chiefly appears in that union with God which maketh them out of themselves; I perceived then an apparent difference, and yet feel myself drawn to love and desire this estate more than all those favours. The felicity of this course (forasmuch as I can express) was a singular freedom from all that could make one adhere to earthly things, with an entire application and apt disposition to all good works. . . . I seemed in my understanding to see a soul thus composed, but far more fair than I can express it.

"It then occurred, and so continues in my mind, that those in Paradise, before the first fall, were in this estate. It seemed to me then, and that hope remains still, that our Lord let me see it, to invite me that way, and because He would give me grace in time to arrive at such an estate, at least in some degree. . . . I humbly beseech you, obtain

my amendment of God, how dear soever it cost. Bestow on us all your blessing.

"Your ever unworthy,

"M. W."

"Upon All Saints' Day, 1615."

Later, in another retreat, a similar favour was granted to her: "God showed her visibly, when she was meditating in London upon the words, *Et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum*, a just soul endowed with great brilliance, giving her clearly to understand that all those who live in this Institute conformably to their vocation will attain to a similar indescribable beauty of soul, because this state leads to inherited justice and conforms to Christ our Lord, as to a most perfect model of all virtues."

Without any loss of time Mary set to work to draw the plan of her Institute, and finished the Memorial in January, 1616. With regard to Mary's life, no more important document exists than this Memorial, for it contains her ideal of her Institute—a novel, daring ideal, but one she supposed necessary to meet the needs of the times. In it Mary's simplicity of character is manifest. God wills the Institute to be so constituted, she seems to argue; necessity demands such a constitution; therefore, come what may—opposition, delay, disappointment—it must be adhered to, and must in the end triumph. So her life's struggle concentrated itself round the petitions contained in the Memorial. For them she sacrificed her peace, her good name, her liberty, and ultimately all hope of success during her life, and this without a murmur or regret. We must

therefore briefly summarise the Memorial, to show what Mary asked, and how difficult it was for the Holy See, in those days of religious and social upheaval, to grant her request. Later history has shown how, in God's own good time, an Institute, substantially identical with her ideal, rose up and called her Mother and Foundress.

Summary of the Memorial presented by Mary Ward to Paul V. 1616.*

1. To follow a mixed kind of life, such as Christ and His Blessed Mother lived upon earth. That is (1) to work at the perfection of our own souls, and (2) to devote ourselves to the salvation of our neighbours "by means of the education of girls, or by any other means that are congruous to the times, or in which it is judged that we can by our labours promote the greater glory of God, and in any place further the propagation of our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church."

2. †*To be subject to the Chief Pontiff alone*, "*and that no religious Order whatsoever, or any person whatsoever . . . should . . . exercise over us authority, power, or jurisdiction.*"

3. To exercise our duties *without enclosure.*

4. *To be bound to no religious habit*, but be allowed to conform our style of dress to that in general use in the countries in which we live.

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* The Memorial in full will be found in the "Life of Mary Ward," by Sister Catherine Chambers," Vol. I.

† The italics are not in the original, but are used to tell out the petitions adverse to the discipline of the Church at that time.

5. *To be allowed the power of dismissing persons, even after profession*, who are found unfitted for religious life, or "who are in any way troublesome and seditious."

In the last paragraph of the Memorial Mary winds up with the following words:

"Lastly, we humbly submit ourselves to the Roman Pontiff now reigning and to his legitimate successors, humbly begging that our Holy Father and Lord, Paul V., would vouchsafe to take this our least congregation under his guardianship and protection, and grant us those indulgences and favours, which may conduce to the consolation and progress of his servants. All and each of which things we beg, having only in view (God knows) that we may better serve our God, and His Spouse the Holy Catholic Church, to the everlasting honour and glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The Memorial was entrusted to a friend of Mary's, Mr. Thomas Sackville, who set off in mid-winter to lay it at the Pope's feet. We may imagine how the little community prayed for its success. But God asked more than prayer. He asked for sacrifice. Prayer is good, but suffering is better, and they were to suffer. Father Lee was ill—dying, in fact. He had journeyed to Dunkirk, where he was to embark for England, in hopes of prolonging his life, or at least to spend his little remaining strength in his native country. But death came sooner than was expected. Whilst waiting for a ship to cross the seas, his last illness came upon him, and God called him to Himself. In him the Society lost a

devoted son—"a true Jesuit, filled with the Holy Ghost," as Bishop Blaise described him. But Mary and her community lost more than this. To them his loss was almost irreparable; he had been father, guide, and faithful friend. And now, when more than ever they wanted advice, guidance, protection, and friendship, God took him away. Yet not one word of complaint did Mary utter, not one word of mourning. "Happy Father Roger Lee!" she exclaimed, as if the thought of his happiness outweighed every private sorrow.

There were anxious hearts at St. Omer during the first three months of the year 1616, eyes that looked Romewards, and hands that were lifted up in prayer. The Memorial on which so much depended was under consideration, and a favourable decision was ardently longed for. Should the Holy See approve, the good, zealous men who opposed it would surely oppose it no longer; the timid souls in the community would regain confidence, the vacillating decision. Mary prayed and fasted and did penance. Three months passed—a short time as things go in Rome. Then the faithful messenger, Sackville, came, bringing the answer from Pope Paul V. The brief was addressed to Bishop Blaise, and to him the Institute was commended. He was desired by every means in his power to help its members "to produce daily more abundant fruits of their labour"; "and," the letter continued, "*if, as we trust, it shall so come to pass, then the Apostolic See will also deliberate about confirming their Institute.*"

Great was the joy of Mary and her community

One of these original portraits still exists, and bears out Winefrid's description. The figure is graceful, the hands shapely, and the head and face well proportioned. The expression of the countenance is sweet and winning, well agreeing with what we are told of her character.

And as to that character we have not only the testimony of her contemporaries, but many of her own letters, notes of retreats, resolutions and instructions, to help us to form a judgment about it. "What cometh out of the mouth," our Lord says, is an index of what is within. We cannot do better, therefore, than study these writings as far as space will allow.

The following paragraph, taken from her autobiography, may seem to us one of those exaggerations to which we think holy persons are given when speaking about themselves. This exaggeration we call humility, and so this humility of the saints becomes equivalent in our minds to an error of judgment which, we think, makes holy people see themselves in a false light. This is not the case. Humility is truth, and can know no excess. With the strong Divine light falling upon them the saints see how imperfect, frail, prone to evil, they are. And from this knowledge comes their self-accusation, their contrition, their penance, and their humility, which is the true esteem of self.

In 1616 Mary wrote :

"Twenty times a day come as it were within a hair-breadth of falling both into great and lesser sins, yet by God's mere goodness and providence brought back as it were to my former state without hurt. . . . When I hear of any one who

commits great sins in the world, I instantly am forced to fly to God, for without He will help, it seems nothing can hinder me from doing the like. . . . I wonder not at others' falls, but the greater they are, the more I admire God's goodness to me, looking back upon my many forepassed doings. O my Lord, how liberal are You, and how rich are they to whom You will vouchsafe to be a friend."

Two years later, when meditating on venial sins, she writes:

"I found no conflict to want all that this world can afford rather than commit the least venial sin, nor could I think of anything I was willing to buy at so dear a rate. I found I was strong, and adventured to propose to myself whether I would not rather want Heaven for ever than buy it by doing the least thing that might offend God. I found that most contentedly I had rather lack that happiness for ever. . . . I was sorry to think that through rashness, custom, and negligence, I should certainly many times offend Him. I besought Him that I might not. Amongst those motives for avoiding venial sins, these moved me most: that God was injured, that our neighbour was hurt, our souls disposed to greater sins, our mind abject, and disposition servile."

Another paper she heads:

"The Loneliness.

"How severely God punisheth sin except we do penances.

"I saw it pleased God better that I should satisfy in this life and to content Him. I besought Him earnestly to show me wherein, or by what way, He would have me make satisfaction (for He

was near me). I considered that to forbear sin I had already resolved and was bound, except I would incur more need of satisfaction. It occurred to me that I should bear *well* all such difficulties as might happen in the doing of His will, . . . and that perhaps I might find more difficulties and crosses in the passages of my life than I did imagine. I then offered myself to suffer with love and gladness whatsoever trouble or contrariety should happen in my doing of His will, but besought Him withal, that none of those things might hinder what His will was to have done."

Then a very remarkable passage comes, containing one of those presages of the future which were often granted to Mary, and which helped her greatly to bear the troubles when they came. It was almost like that moment in the lives of James and John when our Lord said to them, "'Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?' They say to Him, 'We can!'"* Mary, like those two favoured ones, drank of a bitter chalice, and drank it joyfully.

"It appeared to me that there was some great trouble to happen about the confirmation of our course, and with this I found a great and new love to this Institute, and a new embracing or union of affection with it. I offered myself willingly to this difficulty, and besought our Lord with tears that He would give me grace to bear it, and that no contradiction might hinder His will (were His will whatsoever), *for I had then a greater love to His will in general than to any particular.* I was as though the occasion had been present. I saw

* Matt. xx.

there was no help nor comfort for me but to cleave fast to Him, and so I did, for He was there to help me. I besought Him that the love I felt to this course now might stead me then, when that trouble should happen, because perhaps I should not then have means or force or time to dispose myself, or to call so particularly upon Him. I begged of Him with much affection that this prayer I now made might serve as a petition for His grace at that time. I left with a solid contentment, and, as I think desirous to serve and suffer for God; but methought such a thing would certainly happen."

She tells us how she prayed:

"I reflect on my matter; I see without labour the substance of what meditation could show; I lay what I am about before God, and spend the rest of my time in asking Him to know or have what that meditation exacts of me or leads me to. . . . I am not so much moved to pray as called to see."

After a meditation on "humility, comparing us with God," she writes: "He was very near me and within me, *which I never perceived Him to be before.* I was moved to ask Him with great confidence and humility what I came to know—to wit, *what He was.* I said, 'My God, what art Thou?' I saw Him evidently and very clearly go into my heart, and by little and little hide Himself (and there I perceive Him to be still in the same manner, my meditation being ended almost an hour since). I endeavoured to go forward according to the points of meditation, but could not. He held my heart, I could not work. An hour was gone in the space of one quarter. I left unwillingly,

when this news came. To be sure, there was no definite approval. There could not have been in so short a time. But hopes were held out to them. They were to show by the fruits they produced that they were worthy of a place in the garden of the Church, and this to the ardent young souls was the height of their ambition, the only honour they coveted.

Another source of consolation to Mary was the choice of Bishop Blaise for their protector. He had known her for many years, he had interested himself in all her undertakings, and witnessed with joy the progress of her community. More than this: He had defended her and it against evil report. When grave charges circulated in St. Omer had reached the Bishop's ear, he immediately refuted them in a public letter. It will be well for us to know what these charges were, for they were the same in kind that followed the struggling Institute both in England and upon the Continent during the whole of Mary's lifetime. It was alleged:

1. That these ladies deter others from entering religion, and have kept them in their own community.

2. That they call themselves religious women.

3. That they undertake apostolic missions in England.

Bishop Blaise met these charges one by one. Well had it been for Mary had she had more friends of his type. But throughout her whole career he was the only prelate who publicly raised his voice in her behalf.

The Bishop starts with a glowing account of the Institute as

"inculcating the most perfect self-abnegation, and laying the most solid foundations of the spiritual life. The taking of the three essential vows constitutes it a solid condition of life. It sets forth a well-conceived plan for the education of girls, with a view to their training in godliness and the accomplishments befitting their sex. . . ."

Then his Lordship goes on to refute the charges:

(1.) "After strict inquiry, we find the first to be wholly contrary to fact, for since the year 1610 in which they commenced, no less than forty-nine ladies have taken St. Omer on their way to other religious communities. . . .

(2.) We can assert that by neither any peculiarity of dress nor by monastic inclosure, nor by acts, nor by any rule, nor by the assumption of the name, have they ever given themselves out to be nuns or religious women. They are fully aware that the title of 'religious' depends solely on the grant of the Apostolic See. Nay more, we have been informed of the wise instructions of their Superior, which were repeated before her departure for England, enjoining them when asked whether they were nuns or religious women, to answer both publicly and in private that they were not. If any one by reason of their godly and regular living choose to call them religious, they are not to be blamed, as every man of sense will allow.

(3.) "They have not set on foot apostolic missions, but, using a liberty common to all, they have occasion from time to time to go to England on business, as, for instance, to secure their dowry and the like. . . . If at home they profit by their good examples and godly conversation, who may blame them?

"We may further assert that in this our city they are highly respected for their eminent virtues, the edification they afford, and the noble work to which they have devoted themselves. Such is our opinion of this angelic manner of life, which has been suggested by the Holy Ghost for the evident advantage of the English Church and of the English Convents. In witness whereof, we have authenticated these presents with our signature, etc."

God bless Bishop Blaise! If ever there was a champion, he was one. Fearless and truth-loving, he took the side of the weak, and, in opposition to ecclesiastics of rank and influence, vindicated their conduct. As long as the Institute lasts, each and every one of its members, and all who love it, should cherish a deep and lasting gratitude for his memory.

CHAPTER VIII.

"The death in battle is the easiest death.
Be yours the daily dying, life-long death!—
Death of the body that the soul may live."
—A. DE VERE.

IN 1616 Mary Ward was thirty-one; the first bloom of youth was gone, but she was very beautiful. Winefrid Wigmore, her friend and biographer, describes her appearance in these words: "She was rather tall, but her figure was symmetrical. Her complexion was delicately beautiful, her countenance and aspect most agreeable, mingled with I know not what which was attractive. Two times she yielded to the exceeding importunity of certain most deserving friends and allowed herself to be taken. Her presence and conversation were most winning, her manners courteous. It was a general saying, 'She became whatsoever she wore or did.' Her voice in speaking was very grateful and in song melodious. In her demeanour and carriage, an angelic modesty was united to a refined ease and dignity of manner, that made even princes find great satisfaction, yea profit, in conversing with her. Yet these were withal without the least affectation, and were accompanied with such meekness and humility as gave confidence to the poorest and most miserable. There was nothing she did seem to have more horror of, than that there should be anything in herself or hers that might put a bar to the free access of any who should be in need of ought in their power to bestow."

remaining still in the same disposition. My different affections to myself."

"There are three things," she used to say, "for which we ought to lay down our lives—our faith, our chastity, and the honour of our Blessed Lady."

"Let charity go before human prudence; for prudence and charity get on badly together," was another of her sayings.

"I would rather perish in doing my duty than escape neglecting it," she said once, when, in danger of her life, she stopped to give an alms.

One paper Mary heads tersely:

"FAULTS IN ME.

1. A will long grounded in my own choice and opinion, not to have rappes, extacies, etc.

2. That though I would not commit sin or forbear to do my duty for love to any creature, yet that friends should suffer, die, etc., would, I fear, much disquiet me.

3. Very far from contempt of myself, a great lover of myself yet, and I fear of my own will. Whence my desire of often confession comes? *Love to myself*, because sin sensibly burdens."

The following are some of Mary's resolutions made about the year 1616. To get a look at such a soul as hers nothing can be more helpful than the resolutions it forms. For resolutions are the soul's response to God's invitations.

1. "I will endeavour that no sensible motions, nor occurrent accidents, change easily my inward composure nor external carriage, because freedom of

mind and calmness of passions are so necessary both for my own profit in spirit and proceedings with others. . . .

2. Seeing my loathness to suffer hath been the cause of so many excuses, I purpose henceforward to embrace all contrary things as due for my sins, and the part and portion which for myself I have chosen, repeating in such occasion that voice of the Prophet, *Cognovi Domine quia æquitas judicia tua,* etc. . . .

3. I will ever fly all manner of esteem, and yet carry myself, so as I may be grateful to all.

4. I will never endeavour that any love me for myself, and yet will I labour to love all for God and in Him.

5. I will never contradict in desire, word, nor action the will of my Superior. . . .

6. I will every day labour to become perfect in obedience, kissing the five wounds of our Saviour crucified, that I may be such in this virtue as He would have me.

7. When any lights or other motions occur unto me about the Institute, I will commend the same unto the sacred wounds of Christ, and make acts of resignation.

8. I will intend no other thing hereafter in all I do, think, or speak, than the greater glory of God.

9. I will daily endeavour to become more perfect, that my works may be the more agreeable to so excellent an end.

10. Whatsoever I find I want I will make haste to ask it of God.

11. What I would confer with my director absent, I will at my first opportunity confer with God, who is always present.

12. I will labour always to overcome my passions in the beginning.

13. I will never, for any human respects whatsoever, do against or hinder the greater glory of God.

14. I will be always ruled and conform myself wholly to the will and judgment of my director in all things.

15. Always when the clock strikes I will lift up my mind to God, and reflecting briefly that every reasonable soul is made to His image, I will beg grace for myself and all others, especially our company and the Society of Jesus.

16. I will endeavour always to have a ready mind and courageous heart to undergo and exercise all means which may help me to perfection.

17. Feel and taste how sweet the Lord is! I will frequent the Holy Sacraments so often as I may be permitted.

18. I will labour to my uttermost to prepare myself well, remembering the greatness and excellency of the thing.

19. After confession I will endeavour to cut off all affection to my former faults.

20. After Communion I will give myself much to God, with an ardent desire to perform His holy will.

21. I will read every day something of some devout book.

22. I will use often with humility to speak unto our Lord, of whose mercy, grace, and especial assistance I have always so much need.

23. I will follow the counsel which Blessed Father Ignatius so much recommended and

practised, which is always to walk in the presence of my God."

In a different hand, added, no doubt, at a later date, are the following :

"Lord, let that be made possible to me by Thy grace, which seems impossible to me by nature.

24. I will especially endeavour, both in myself and others, the exact observance of times and rules.

I will always love, highly esteem, and choose, if I may be permitted, this holy Institute. And in myself and my proceedings I will seriously endeavour to have and exercise those virtues which are proper and peculiar to this Institute, truly, solidly, and perfectly. To conclude, I will take it for a pattern to level my life and actions by, so as obedience will permit.

Note.—It is necessary that we arm ourselves with a great desire to suffer much and many crosses."

"*This holy Institute*," Mary wrote. All the reverence and devotedness of her nature centred in the Institute, for she looked upon it, not as her creation, but as that of "Blessed" Ignatius of Loyola, and as chosen for her by God Himself. Its rules were not her rules, but his adapted. By them its members were to be drawn towards the highest perfection. "Ours ought to be endowed with the zeal of Apostles and the recollection of spirit of hermits to attend at the same time to both their own and their neighbours' salvation," she said, in an instruction to her community.

It was in these early days at St. Omer, soon after Pope Paul V.'s brief, that an incident occurred which brought out Mary's zeal for the Institute in a singular manner. The incident is interesting as being one of those rare occasions in which we find in her traces of a Boanerges. Her friend Mr. Sackville had come from Rome, as we have seen. One day, when on a visit, he repeated to the community a somewhat disparaging remark heard there concerning the Institute. Mary reports the unfortunate speech, and comments upon it, showing by her strong words how deep was the trouble it occasioned :

"Mr. Sackville, commending us and our cause, and telling how much it was esteemed by men of judgment and amongst the Cardinals at Rome, Father Minister being by, answered, 'It is true while they are in their first fervour, but fervour will decay, and when all is done, they are but women!'

. . .

"I would know what you all think he meant by this speech of his, 'but women,' and what 'fervour' is. Fervour is a will to do good; that is, a preventing grace of God, and a gift given gratis by God which we could not merit. It is true fervour doth many times grow cold; but what is the cause? Is it because we are women? No; but because we are imperfect women. Fervour is not placed in feelings, but in a will to do well, which women may have as well as men. There is no such difference between men and women that women may not do great things, as we have seen by example of many saints who have done great

things. And I hope in God it will be seen that women in time to come will do much. Many think it nothing to do ordinary things. But for us it is. To do ordinary things well, to keep our constitutions, and all other things that be ordinary in every office and employment, whatsoever it be, to do it well, this is for us, and this by God's grace will maintain fervour. If women were made so inferior to men in all things, why were they not exempted in all things, as they are in some? I confess wives are to be subject to their husbands, men are head of the Church, women are not to administer Sacraments, nor preach in public churches; but in all other things, wherein are we so inferior to other creatures that they should term us 'but women'?

. . .

"I would to God that all men understood this truth, that women if they will be perfect, and if they would not make us believe that we can do nothing and that we are but women, might do great matters.

"There was a Father that lately came into England whom I heard say that he would not for a thousand worlds be a woman, because he thought a woman could not apprehend God. I answered nothing, but only smiled, although I could have answered him by the experience I have of the contrary. I could have been sorry for his want—I mean not want of judgment—not to condemn his judgment, for he is a man of very good judgment; his want is in experience. . . .

"What can this profit you, to tell you you are but women, weak and able to do nothing, and that fervour will decay? I say what does this profit you, but to bring you to dejection and without

hope of perfection. All are not of this opinion. Sure I am, he that this day went to Heaven [Father Roger Lee], where he is able to do more for you than when he was here, was of another mind, as many of you can witness. He never dealt with any that he led not to God by perfection. This is all I have to say at this time."

Another day she cheers up her children by a few encouraging words :

"You are spectacles to God, angels, and men ; it is certain God has looked upon you as He never looked upon any. I say not better, nor in a greater or more excellent manner, nor with more love, for I intend not to make any comparisons. But I say as He never looked upon any. . . . Men, you know, look diversely upon you ; all look upon you as beginners of a course never thought of before, marvelling what you intend and what will be the end of you. Some, thinking we are women, and aiming at greater matters than was ever thought women were capable of, expect perhaps to see us fall, or come short in many things. Others, I am sure, look upon us with another conceit, expecting all the world to be bettered by us ! Now, sisters, since God has particularly looked upon you, calling you to this state of life, and giving you this vocation, I doubt not but some of you thirst greatly after the effecting of His will, and have no patience that you have profited no more. . . .

"With respect to this good Father, I must needs defend this truth of which I am assured, that fervour needs not necessarily decay because we are women. Yet I intend not to condemn him ; notwithstanding this, he may have much knowledge, and perhaps he hath all other knowledge, and I

have only this, and light of this only truth, by which, perhaps, I must be saved. Therefore I must and will ever stand for this truth, that women may be perfect, and that fervour must not necessarily decay because we are women."

This was vigorous language for one so gentle as Mary Ward. But the occasion warranted vigour. She was holding up a high ideal to her sisters, to attain which fortitude and perseverance were above all necessary. What would become of them if a faint-hearted spirit crept in? If those whom they revered—priests and religious—taught that the ideal was above their sex, that they were aiming at an impossibility?

In the following instructions to her community the same encouraging, upraising spirit appears:

"*How we are to conduct ourselves towards God, towards our Neighbour, and towards Ourselves.*

It very ill becomes a religious person to be faint-hearted, for she knows well that God is omnipotent, Who can turn all to her profit, and that He loves her infinitely, and, therefore, will permit nothing which could hurt.

The true children of this company shall accustom themselves to act not out of fear, but solely from love, because they are called by God to a vocation of love.

A troubled dejected spirit will never love God perfectly, nor do much good to His honour.

Whoever would work much good in this congregation must have an entire mistrust in herself and great confidence in God. Prize thy honour higher

than thy life, but esteem it little to lose both for the love of Jesus Christ.

We ought to work and suffer for God, and for the rest let Him make use of us according to His good pleasure, for the fulfilment of His most holy will should be our sole wish and only desire.

Desire not the least thing which is contrary to God and thy conscience under the pretext and in the hope of attaining a great good.

Be ashamed to say that anything appears hard to thee in the service of God, for to those who love all is light.

Satisfy thyself with nothing which is less than God.

Divine love is like fire, which will not let itself be shut up, for it is impossible to love God and not to labour to extend His honour.

Show thyself at all times glad and joyful, for Almighty God loves a cheerful giver.

Mistrust in God ties as it were His hands, so that He cannot bestow upon us His blessing and His Divine gifts.

Care not for what concerns thine own person, but stand up zealously for whatever touches God and His honour.

Prize thy calling highly and love it above all others, since the Eternal Truth has said in the Gospel, that he who keeps and teaches the Commandments shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whoever will serve God according to her state in this Institute must of necessity love the Cross, and be ready to suffer much for Christ's sake.

Our Neighbours and Ourselves.

Be all things to all men, that so thou mayest win

all for God, and be careful as much as thou canst to satisfy all.

Make use of gentle and kind words when thou reprovest any one, for thou wilt thus effect more than through those which are harsh and overbearing.

Love all men, but love them not on thine own account, but for God.

Ours shall most diligently be on their guard that they never speak of the defects of other people, and especially not of those of religious. They shall also not complain of one another, but preserve charity indissolubly as the peculiar virtue of our company.

Do not easily be offended at the doings of others, since thou canst not know what is their intention; but accustom thyself to put a good construction on all thou seest and hearest.

Although the conversion of souls is very pleasing to God, yet He loves the perfection of each one so greatly, that He wills not that any one should commit even the smallest sin, were the whole world to be converted thereby.

Take away from no one what he loves, unless thou givest him instead something he loves still better.

It is a greater grace to help to save souls than oneself to suffer martyrdom.

Do good, and do it well.

Wherever thou findest thyself, remember that not the place, but the practices sanctify.

Whatever falls to thee to do, that perform as much as thou canst faithfully and diligently; but be not too careful as to how it may turn out, nor whether it will be hazardous or not, but commit it to the good God.

Let nothing disturb the peace of thy heart, not even thy sins.

As a thirsty man eagerly swallows whatever he receives to drink, so a thirster after perfection drinks in with joy every admonition, be it sweet or bitter.

In our calling, a cheerful mind, a good understanding, and a great desire after virtue are necessary, but of all three a cheerful mind is the most so."

This last paragraph of all is, perhaps, the most characteristic of Mary. Cheerfulness was her pet virtue. A wedge may be a little thing, but in mechanics it is a great power. So is cheerfulness in the spiritual life. Mary's face beamed with it, her writings are lit up with it, her works are leavened with it. Never, speaking humanly, could she have done and suffered as she did, if she had not been cheerful. There is no medicine like cheerfulness, no strength to compare with it. It is the economy of life, and ekes out the little anything we may possess—physical strength or mental qualities. Let the religious be cheerful *always* and he will be a saint; let the child be cheerful *always* and it will be innocent. We shall find traces of Mary's beaming cheerfulness all through her life, and to it we may partly ascribe her success with souls. The stern drive, the cheerful attract. And as a rule souls are won, not driven.

CHAPTER IX.

"They have searched after iniquity: they have failed in their search."—*Ps.* lxiii. 7.

AFTER 1616 there was little rest for Mary. Busy years of founding followed—years of travel, privations, and fatigue; years of anxiety, suspense, and sorrow. Was she physically strong and able to bear her burden? Few of God's holy ones have been strong, and Mary was not of the few. At the age of twenty-six, we are told, "she was so attenuated, physicians judged that in the course of nature she could not live five years." She lived more than six times five years, with sufferings not only undiminished, but increasing year by year. Henceforth her illnesses were frequent, dangerous, and acutely painful; scarcely for one hour together was she free from pain. These facts we must bear in mind if we would rightly estimate the heroism of her character and the work she accomplished.

The first call upon Mary's zeal came from Liège, but from whom we do not know; very likely from Father Gerard, the friend of her childhood. In 1616 he had begun a Jesuit College in the picturesque old town, and very soon after came Mary's invitation to found. She accepted it joyfully, and, with necessary letters of introduction from Bishop Blaise to Ferdinand, Prince Bishop of Liège, began her new foundation. Barbara Ward, scribe on that occasion, gives the following description of the foundation, in her peculiarly laconic style: "A complete college was finished, with

church and schools and what else necessary." That the "college" was appreciated we know from the fact that scarcely a year later Mary established a novitiate in the same city. This it was her delight to visit, and when there she followed all the exercises of the novices as if she were the youngest and strongest amongst them. She adorned the church with rich and costly gifts, had the services carried out according to the Roman Ritual—just then being introduced into France—and the singing exquisitely rendered. The Prince Bishop frequently attended Divine service in the convent church, because, he said, "the music there far surpassed his own choir." So pleased was he by the work done by the Institute in his diocese, that two years later he invited Mary to make foundations at Cologne and Trèves. She was so poor at the time he made the request that she had not money enough to pay the cost of the necessary journeys. But the Archduchess Isabella heard of her difficulty, and, with that princely generosity for which she was remarkable, provided her with a sufficient sum to begin her work. The two houses were established, but we know little of their beginnings, except that they were the means of drawing friends to the Institute. Albergati, Papal Nuncio of Lower Germany, interested himself greatly in Mary's plans; Ferdinand became her staunch supporter; and the saintly Dominican, Father Domenico di Gesù, learnt to know and venerate her as a saint.

Mary's position at the head of the growing congregation did not suffer her to remain long in one place. Four times in two years she crossed and

recrossed the sea to England; "taken twice," we are told, "in her passing the seas to and fro, and yet came off." Once,

"A fearful storm came on, and from the visible danger of death all the persons in the ship were filled with the greatest terror. Mary alone remained of good courage, and comforted them with the promise that nothing would happen to them, which soon came to pass, for with her usual confidence she threw an *Agnus Dei* into the sea, and it became completely calm." Another time,

"When Mary was on the sea on the Feast of St. James in the year 1618, by invoking this holy Apostle as her particular patron, she, to her great astonishment, quieted a dangerous mutiny which had arisen in the ship; whence she afterwards acknowledged that she never sought any grace from God through the intercession of this great prince of Heaven, that she did not receive it."

Let us stay awhile in England now with Mary and her companions, and watch the stirring events of the next few years. For this way we shall be able better to understand the sad history which has to be told later.

The year 1618 was a year of terrible trial for the Catholics of England. The penal laws were enforced with greater rigour than ever, and the fines for recusancy increased, for the King was needy. The prisons were crowded with men and women "whose conscience would not serve them" to go to the heretical service.

Yet there were hundreds of priests at work

Mass was said daily in many a quiet country house and superb mansion. Even in the very prisons the Sacraments were administered and the Holy Sacrifice was offered. Mary established her band of workers in London. They had no settled abode, for their movements were watched, but lived now in one place, now in another. One time we find them in a grand old mansion called Hungerford House; later on in Knightsbridge, a little obscure village in the suburbs.

It may excite surprise that Mary should have chosen the most dangerous place in the country for her headquarters, but she had found from early experience that to face the enemy boldly was safer than to skulk in obscurity. "Modesty is not often persuasive," says Father Faber, and in these times it was positively dangerous. She and her companions, therefore, took their position in London as ladies of rank, laid aside the quiet black dress so well known in the streets of St. Omer, and put on instead the yellow starched ruff—*the newest thing*, as we should say—and the pompous farthingale of the period. Barbara Ward is described as "dressed in a bright taffeta gown, with rich petticoats trimmed according to the latest fashion." Thus fashion for once was turned to good account, and screened God's work from persecution. For by this outward show, and by keeping open house and receiving visitors at all times of the day, Mary was able to entertain priests and their penitents, to instruct the timid, and bring back to the Faith many who had wandered.

It was about this time that she received a splendid testimony from no less a personage than George Abbot, the so-called Archbishop of Canterbury,

and an arch-persecutor of Catholics. He was heard to say of her: "That woman had done more harm than many priests, and he would exchange six or seven Jesuits for her." So he published a description of her appearance, sought for her diligently, and set spies to arrest her. Once he expressed a wish to see her. To gratify him, Mary presented herself at Lambeth Palace. It was putting her head into the lion's den, but, brave from childhood, she knew no fear. He was out. As a souvenir of her visit she engraved her name with a diamond on a window-pane in his Lordship's palace, and returned home. Many incidents of these times show how strong were her nerves and how great her confidence in God.

"Having borrowed of a special friend a garden house near London, which yet was private and secure for her, he being a Protestant, and powerful in regard to the office he held; in this house for some special service to the glory of God, she had much company, so as information was given and spies set to observe what passed, and finally the house beset by guards, but at a distance, yet so as none could pass in or out without note, which was cause that all the company alarmed, ours in particular, begged our dearest Mother to disguise herself and so slip away. She answered, 'No,' because God's service required her staying. This was on the Saturday; all passed quietly that day and the next.

"The Monday morning, her business ended, she gave order of those of her company for her removal. The others thought this was no more needful, hearing no more of the bruit, not willing to quit

the place unless of necessity. But this humble and faithful servant of God answered, 'Hitherto I have had my good Master's warrant for my stay, His business requiring it, but that done, I expect not a privilege for my own respects'; and so immediately departed by the public door in coach, accompanied by two other coaches, beside horses. Within half an hour the officers came, broke open the doors, searched, and seized upon all."

There was a strange charm about Mary's person —even the rough guards who were set over her were awed by her presence. Once she had been taken into custody when attempting to cross the sea, and was imprisoned. One of her fellow-travellers, feeling sure that things which Mary kept were safe, brought

"together all that she conceived might be dangerous, and gave it to her, but not with so much advisedness but that the guard saw it and, fearful that something might pass that might argue their infidelity in their execution of their commission, desired to know what the maid had given her. She answered it did not import them, but upon condition that they promised to return it to her again, they should see it, and taking out a fine crystal reliquary showed it them, which they with great reverence and wonder beheld and returned it to her, and this though a thing express against the law."

Among the touching incidents in Mary Ward's life none, perhaps, is more touching than her charity towards an apostate priest, whose name is kept secret. This priest had been neglectful of his

sacred office, and had forgotten even how to say Mass and recite his Breviary. Mary left nothing undone to gain his soul; she laboured, planned, and prayed. At last she won him from his wicked ways, but, fearful lest, in the midst of daily dangers and temptations, he should once more relapse, she induced him to leave the country. They sailed together, but contrary winds obliged the captain to put back to shore. On landing she was seized, taken prisoner to London, and arraigned before the justices at the Guildhall. One of these magnates, noticing she held a rosary in her hand, said some blasphemous words. Mary, fearless of consequences, exclaimed indignantly, "What! a miserable man, a good-for-nothing wretch, is to blaspheme and revile the most holy Mother of God, the Queen and Lady of all creatures!" She was committed to prison for her boldness, but

"so far from being frighted or daunted, that she aloud, with a courageous and heavenly voice, said our Blessed Lady her litanies, as she passed in coach from the place of judgment to the prison, where arrived, she knelt down and kissed the threshold of the gate, as a place sanctified by the cause for which she entered there; and this publicly before them all in the presence of the officers who conducted her, which humanly was to incense their rage and fury against her." But the opposite happened: "Contrarywise, they seemed all her slaves. It was without doubt, that He, Whose honour she sought, undertook her defence."

In prison Mary had but one trouble. Where was the poor priest? Had he also been seized? Was his soul in danger? She knelt on the stone

floor of her cell and prayed to his guardian angel. Presently she saw in a vision the room in which the priest slept, the bed on which he lay, and over it, protecting and guarding him, his good angel.

"Do you not see the care I have of him?" the angel said. A great joy filled Mary's heart, and she abandoned her charge with perfect trust to his angel keeper. Later she found that the room had been "so perfectly discovered to her, as she putting down what she saw, it was found so conformable to the reality, as there was not the planting of a stool found different. This angel seemed to her of such beauty, as she was wont to call him the 'Fine Good Angel,' and the grace done her herein of high consequence. Employing about that time a painter, and willing to make the aforesaid good priest in love with his good angel, made the painter draw him by her description in his posture, etc., which had in it so great incitation to reverence and devotion, that the good old painter, then sixty years old, began to say daily a *Pater* and *Ave* to his good angel, which he had never done before."

It was at the time of this arraignment that Mary was condemned to death. Why the sentence was not carried out we have no means of knowing. "For fear of odium," one biographer explains; "By the care and diligence of her friends she regained her liberty," another says; "By her friends paying down money," writes a third. This last is the true explanation probably. Gold was a powerful agent in those miserable days. By it life could be bought as well as sold. At all events, Mary was set free.

Much as Mary loved the hardships, and the chances of martyrdom the life in London afforded,

she was bound to shift her position as the good of her cause required. And a time came when peril to the Institute, great in England, was greater still elsewhere. Far away at Liège, on the hill-tops overlooking the city, where the big white novice-ship house rose up on the *Pierreuse*, mischief was brewing. Mary left London, therefore, and went to settle "disputes and differences" where all should have been union and peace. We need not dwell long on this episode; indeed, we should not speak of it at all but that the fall of one servant of God brought out the sanctity of another.

Sister Praxedes, a young religious recently professed, gave out to her sisters that God had made known to her His will concerning the Institute. Mary Ward, she said, was a dupe of the devil, and quite a different rule of life ought to be adopted. Unfortunately, the "miserable woman," as Father Gerard does not hesitate to call her, drew to her side many of the young community who did not know Mary Ward personally, and some of the Jesuit Fathers in the town who had never approved of her "innovations."

On arriving at Liège, Mary immediately went into retreat, and then began her investigations. She listened to representations, gave all full liberty to speak, and, after praying and deliberating, consulted Father Gerard upon the matter. What if the young religious were right? what if she had received light from God, and that through her He was going to carry out another plan? Such a case was possible. If so, Mary would stand aside, or, rather, help Praxedes with all her power, and give her the benefit of her light and experience. What did it matter who was the instrument so long as

God's work was done? In this spirit Mary wrote the following letter to Father Gerard :

"Rev. dear Father,

"As I was to-day in a sea of uncertainties and full of fears forth of my own inability to do anything how little soever without some powerful and extraordinary help, calling to God for His, as my last and best refuge, and receiving Him to that purpose, this came to my mind to propose. . . . Might not Sister Praxedes set down what she had seen, with what else she can obtain of God touching that matter in form of an Institute? What if she were bid by yourself or Father Burton to draw an Institute with as great care as she would, if she were in my place and I in another world, so as this business rested wholly upon her? She may likewise know what I had from God touching this, if that be thought fit, or would further her, which was as follows (understood as it is writ, without adding or altering one syllable) : "Take the same as the Society. Father General will never permit it. Go to him." These are the words, whose worth cannot be valued, nor the good they contain too dearly bought; these gave sight where there was none, made known what God would have done, gave strength to suffer what since hath happened, assurance of what is wished for in time to come. And if ever I be worthy to do anything more about the Institute, hither I must come to draw. I could say a great deal of those words, but never all; but she will far better see what God intended by them, if she will but ask what He meant by them, except He, that can do all that He will, and all that He doth is well, give her some other ground to work upon. . . . I will do

my best and all I can (for her). Do in this what pleaseth you.

"Your Reverence's ever,
"MARY WARD."

Humility is a beautiful thing, and it is beautiful because it is truth. Truth in children is simplicity; in men, humility. Mary Ward was humble in a degree seldom reached.

But God himself interfered by one of those visitations that strike terror into hearts. Sister Praxedes was taken suddenly ill. The physician spoke seriously of her case. She was warned, and advised to receive the Last Sacraments. She only smiled and said that if she did not recover from that illness "all that she had seen and heard was false, and Mary Ward was enlightened by God." When morning dawned Praxedes lay stretched upon her bed—a corpse!

How quickly poison spreads! The deluded Sister went to her account, but she left behind her germs of disaffection that cost Mary labour, suffering, and prayer to destroy. Years passed and still the evil lived on. Besides Praxedes, there was in the community at Liège one who had been treated as a friend by Mary, but who in return used all her influence and talents and experience to injure the good wôrk there and elsewhere. Whilst holding the responsible post of Ministress, this Sister was secretly spreading discord, jealousy, and rebellion in the community, and giving lying information to the enemies of the Church outside. "Godfather's Information," an account written by a spy of the doings of Catholics abroad, and of which we shall have to speak presently, has some references to Mary and her work which were

obtained mainly from this unhappy Sister. Of her death some years later we have a few lines in one of Mary's letters, written in 1627 :

"Grace is soon lost. Poor Mary Allcock! Mother Elizabeth (Cotton) will tell you she is dead, and how she died." This is all Mary has to say of one who wronged her more, perhaps, than any other person.

When Mary Ward quitted England she left behind her a little band of workers, who were to carry on their apostolate among rich and poor alike. They were to adopt any dress that would best answer their end, and enter any society where God's honour could be promoted. A document of this time, called "Sister Dorothea's Narrative,"* gives us an excellent idea of the kind of work undertaken by the members of this Institute. It is far too long to quote, except in scraps. This Sister was one of Mary's companions, and in a simple, homely way tells her own story :

"According to your command I intend in the best and briefest manner I can to relate my proceedings and manner of living : which is in the house of a poor woman, pretending to be her kinswoman. . . . I dare not keep schools publicly, as we do beyond the seas, especially at my first coming ; . . . but I teach and instruct children in the houses of parents, which I find to be a very good way, and by that occasion I get acquain-

* See Sister Catherine Chambers' "Life of Mary Ward," Vol. II.

tances, and so gaining first the affections of their parents, after with more facility their souls are converted to God.

"Besides teaching children, I endeavour to instruct the simple and vulgar sort; I teach them their *Pater*, *Ave*, Creed, Commandments, etc. Those who in respect of the fear of persecution, loss of goods, and the like, I cannot at the first bring to resolve to be living members of the Catholick Church, I endeavour at least so to dispose them that understanding and believing the way to salvation, they seldom or unwillingly go to heretical churches, abhor the receiving of their profane Communion, leave to offend God in any great matter, or more seldom to sin, and by little and little I endeavour to root out the custom of swearing, drinking, etc. I tend and serve poor people in their sickness. I make salves to cure their sores, and endeavour to make peace between those at variance. In these works of charity, I spend my time; not in one place, but in many, where I see there is best means of honouring God. But it is much to be lamented, that when poor souls are come to that pass that they desire nothing more than to save their souls, by means of the Sacraments, it is incredible to say how hard a thing it is to get a priest to reconcile them; partly though the scarcity of priests, and partly through the fear of those with whom they live. I had at once three in great distress, for the space of half a year I could by no means get one, although I went many a mile to procure one."

Such an account any one of Mary Ward's companions might have written. But a testimony more valuable, as being from an outsider, has come

down to us. The document is written by a saintly Jesuit, Father Andrew White, the "Apostle of Maryland," as he was afterwards called. Being on the English mission about this time (1621), he became acquainted with the Sisters, and thoroughly appreciated them. A large sum of money was left to him, he tells us,

"towards the setting up of some pious work, which *coram Dno*, I shall think most glorious to Almighty God, most necessary for the Church's universal good, help of our country, and perpetual honour and benefit of their families. And having now duly and exactly weighed in the sight of God our Creator and Lord what this work ought to be; do find and clearly see that none may be compared in these conditions with the Holy Institute which out of His infinite goodness and tender mercy the Holy Ghost has inspired to His devout servant and spouse, the illustrious virgin and most Reverend Mother Mary Warde, Chief Superior of the sacred beginning Society of Jesus for Women"; . . . because the members of this Institute "do not content themselves to live in monasteries for themselves alone, and assist only with penances and prayers the forces of God, . . . but according to their measure of grace . . . leave their rest and retreat as our Blessed Saviour did His Father's bosom to squench the fire of sin and heresy. . . . Therefore to the greater glory of God our Creator and Lord, I name and design . . . that the above-named sum be given to the said most Reverend Mother, or her assigns or successors, for the better advancing of her desires therein. . . . In witness thereof I firm this with mine

own hand and name, this fourth of February anno dni 1621, *stilo prisco*, London.

"ANDREW WHITE,

"*P. of the Society of Jesu.*"*

We must cherish the remembrance of such testimony on the part of Mary's contemporaries, as it is the only refutation left to us of the many vague calumnies which were at this time being spread against her and her Institute. As a sample of these injurious statements we may quote short extracts from "Godfather's Information." The full title of the book is "Certain Observations delivered me by Mrs. Marie Allcock, the first Mother Ministress of Mrs. Warde's Company at Liège."

"She [Mary] came like a duchess to visit the Ignatian prisoners at Wisbeach, in coach, attended with pages riding with her in said coach, and two or three attendants of her own sex, and was so bountiful, or rather prodigal, that she gave each keeper (who wished more such guests) an angel apiece."

"Lodging one night at a gentlewoman's house, she gave the chamber-maid an angel, and likewise conformable to the other officers."

"When she travelleth she is extraordinary jovial, and (to the Mother Minister's grief) most lavish in expenses both at home and abroad."

"At her return from England, or any other place where by occasion she hath travelled, though she had not been absent above eight days, her manner was to be feasted for three days successively, the first night in extraordinary great banquet."

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* See Chambers' "Life of Mary Ward," Vol. II.

"She is so vainglorious that she wrote the manner of her bounty to the Superior of her society beyond the seas, who neglected not to communicate it (to her high commendation) in public recreation to all the congregation."

It would be ludicrous if it were not intensely painful to see how a calumnious pen can distort the most innocent facts and present them as wickednesses. No one knowing anything of Mary's character will deny that she was generous, lavish even. The endowment of the Convent of Poor Clares with the greater part of her own dowry, the rule that children of all classes should be taught free of charge, the rich gifts made to her newly founded house at Liège, the costly church stuffs bought when the funds were at their lowest —these are instances of lavishness. But is this blameworthy? What we know of the Divine ways leads us to see that God is not only generous, but lavish, with His gifts, both in the order of nature and of grace. Why should not His saints be like Him?

To any one less prejudiced than Mary Allcock Mary's gifts would be taken as evidences, not of extravagance, but of well-calculated prudence, of necessity even. When prisons were visited, secrecy had to be bought and gaolers bribed to silence at any cost. They could make access to prisoners easy or impossible, a matter of pleasure or of death. The comfort, too, of the prisoners was entirely in their hand, and surely golden angels were well bestowed when by their means half-starved priests and other confessors of the Faith were better clothed and fed and lodged.

Doubtless, too, Mary used a coach, and was attended by pages and outriders, as the document says, but then she was often the guest of persons whose rank entitled them to travel in state, and it was in their company she made her expeditions.

CHAPTER X.

"Oh you, that of your own good will offered yourself to danger, bless the Lord."—*Judges* v. 9.

WE come now to the most momentous step of Mary's life—the journey she took to Rome to plead personally the cause of her Institute. In those days, even more than now, it was a thing unheard of for a woman to attend at the Papal Court and be her own advocate. But the singularity of the proceeding does not seem to have troubled Mary Ward in the least. She had the cool courage and undaunted spirit of a pioneer.

Pope Paul V., whose provisional approbation and words of encouragement had gladdened the expectant hearts at St. Omer, was dead. Alexander Ludovisi had succeeded as Gregory XV., and at his feet Mary determined to kneel and present her petition. One of her companions was Winefrid Wigmore, from whom we have a detailed account of the long and dangerous journey. And since so much of Mary's life was spent in travelling, we cannot do better than follow her on the road, to see how she and her companions managed the tedious business. Winefrid begins her story with the good-bye visit Mary paid to the Archduchess Isabella at Brussels :

"At the leave-taking, the Archduchess, who had given so many proofs of her love and esteem of her, entreated her not to go to Rome in her own clothes, for such was the malice borne her, as her

life would be insecure. The servant of God could not much apprehend this and was far above these fears, but forth of her humility, to be thought as others needy of human and ordinary helps, put on a pilgrim's habit."

On the 21st of October, 1621, "St. Ursula her day, she began her journey in her pilgrim's attire, and with four companions, a maid, a priest, a gentleman and a serving man, two horses, one to carry the baggage and another to ease her who should be weary."*

The four companions were Mary Poyntz, Barbara Ward, Margaret Horde, and Winefrid Wigmore. The priest was Father Henry Lee, nephew to Father Roger Lee. He devoted himself as chaplain to Mary for long years to come, and accompanied her in many of her toilsome journeys. Father Gerard, in a letter to him, alludes to his "constant charity and patience towards the Sisters," and congratulates him on being their faithful friend and assistant. Mary often mentions him in her letters.

The "gentleman" referred to above has a beautiful history. He was Robert Wright, Mary's cousin, "son of gunpowder Treason," as Secretary Winwood tersely styles him. He attached himself to Mary in the capacity of man-servant, and performed the most menial offices in her service—cleaning boots, chopping wood, lighting fires, saddling horses. For sixty years he lived this obscure life, and at Mary's death gave himself with equal devotedness to Mary Poyntz. He seemed to be always in

*Two pilgrims' hats are kept as precious relics at Alt Ötting, in Bavaria. They were worn by Mary and one of her companions on this journey. They are beaver, with high crowns and broad brims.

prayer. The floor served him for the scanty rest he allowed himself, and neither winter nor summer did he ever go to bed. With the exception of his superiors no one knew his name or position. At the age of eighty he died in the odour of sanctity.

"At first setting out," Winefrid continues, "said our Blessed Lady's litanies, all answering; then the *Itinerarium* in the same manner, then to each of the following a *Pater* and *Ave:* her and her companions' own good Angel, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, the Angel of her voyages, and 'the Fine Good Angel,' the two saints above named, St. Joseph, St. Ignatius, and St. Anne, then made her hour of prayer. When done, she recreated herself with some profitable and cheerful discourse; if there were seculars with her of quality, she applied it to their capacities. If occasion of rocks, falling of waters, and other things, high pine trees, meadows, or pleasant brooks, she would dilate herself in admiration of God Almighty, His power, providence, wisdom, and goodness. What had of melancholy and solitary, suited exceedingly with her disposition. Sometimes she would complain that such things distracted in her prayer and meditation, such content and recreation she found in them.

"If she had time and opportunity she did always eat before she set forth, and that was always provided over-night. At noon, she nor her companions never made any meal, but her servants she was careful should. In the afternoon she took time for her devotions, saying her beads, etc. Near the place where she was to lodge she said the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for her

preservation that day, a *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*, etc., for the graces bestowed on the saints to whose protection she had commended herself. When arrived and in her chamber, she sought out some picture, before which kneeling down, she made an offer of herself and all her actions to be done in that place to the greatest honour and glory of God. When order was given for supper, and linen had for beds, etc., she had a saint's life read, that of the day, if there were any, if not some other, and for this end carried always with her the Saints' Lives and Roman Martyrology, which was also daily read. The time of meal she took occasion to say something that might edify and profit those of the inn that waited. She was careful to spare their labours, and that things should be left in the manner as they were found, which did so much to edify and oblige them, as they not only remained slaves to her, but it was enough for those who belonged to her to have relation to her, passing the ways she had, to find all duty and service. Which was the same in effect with coachmen, vetturini, etc., amongst whom there was none so wicked whom with her prudence and goodness she did not overcome."

For two months Mary and her companions journeyed Romewards on foot. Through Lorraine they went to Nancy and to Bâle, up the rocky roads that lead to the Great St. Gothard Pass, amongst snow-capped giants whose heads were lost in cloud. What surroundings for souls like theirs! How silently they would look on the death-cold scenes around! How spontaneously their minds would run to prayer, and what a strong, generous prayer it would be! As night

came on in these snowy regions they would see the deep black sky, with its sharp-cut stars glittering bright. The icy winds would howl through the narrow passes, the damp mists fall stealthily upon them. When morning dawned the reddening peak of a distant cone would tell of the rising sun.

That qualities of no ordinary kind were needed to head such an enterprise is manifest. Mary had these qualities. She had courage of the highest order—that which endures; she had forethought, energy, decision, and, above all, the spirit of self-sacrifice, as the following incident, slight in itself and mentioned only by the way, will show:

"After having gone thirty-five miles in one day, near being benighted and in danger to find the gates shut, she would have undertaken to have hastened her pace, and to have gone before to have kept the gates open."

Travelling thus they reached Milan, and there they stayed a day to rest. Then on again, through Bologna to Ancona. One more day of rest they took with our Lady at Loreto, where, with "unspeakable devotion, faith and confidence in God, she made her prayer, and took for her part and portion to labour and suffer for Christ, having lively represented to her the much she was to suffer."

Thence onward to Rome — fifteen hundred miles in two months! The Eternal City came in sight on Christmas Eve. Mary, "as soon as she beheld the steeple of St. Peter's Church, sixteen miles off, knelt down and profoundly inclined, reverenced those sacred relics of the Apostles, and

rendered all submission to that Holy See and Chair of His successors."

Weary beyond measure, the travellers arrived in the Holy City. But they did not think of repose. Like loyal children of the Church, their first visit was paid to Peter's tomb; their second to the Gesù, to the shrine of "Blessed Ignatius." Then, after hours spent in earnest prayer, they turned in to rest.

Where are now the pilgrims of olden days? We step out of saloon carriages, into easy cushioned victorias, drive quickly to well-appointed hotels, are drawn up to our apartments by smooth-going machinery, and after dinner, and a siesta perhaps, drive to our devotions. Where are the pilgrims of other days!

Their hearts beat with joy at being in the Holy City. Yet there was little enough to be elated about. "Besides God and His holy saints," Winefrid goes on, "we expected to find but few other friends. We were strangers in a foreign country, far from home with little hopes of human means, without language, acquaintance, provision, or money—all which difficulties are very potent, and will try the hearts of the most perfect men." In their loneliness they chose lodgings near the English College, where some of the party had brothers or other relations. John Poyntz was there, and Adrian Fortescue and Robert Rookwood. Not that these young students could in any way help them; but there was no doubt a feeling of home in their neighbourhood.

Mary's business was with the Holy Father, and, as usual, she was prompt in setting about it. Three days had hardly passed when she found her way into the presence of His Holiness. Gregory, in his

seventieth year, was old and feeble, his beard was long and white, his face pale, his eyes dulled with the acute pain which was bringing him to the grave. But when he spoke, so bright a look animated his countenance, so reassuring was the tone of his voice, that all who came into his presence were cheered and comforted. "He received Mary with singular benevolence, and with all fatherly and benign expressions, so far as to say, 'God had in good time provided for His Church,' alluding to the profit which was to come of her labour." Had the Supreme Pontiff, standing so near eternity, a sight of what in after years was to come about by Mary's means? We do not know. Those who stand in high places are sometimes given a wonderful foreknowledge.

In answering the letters of introduction Mary brought to him from the Archduchess Isabella, the King of Spain, and the Emperor Ferdinand, Gregory writes words of praise and admiration for their *protégée*. To Isabella he says: "Mary's piety is highly to be praised, which has with such labour gathered together a band of companions whom she brings forward and offers for God's honour, at a time when the Prince of Darkness employs so many hosts of ungodly men in the fight against the Catholic faith. We rejoice that many noble women stand beneath her banner." Then he adds: "As the letter of your Highness contains such an excellent testimony of all her virtues, we desire that her piety and this recommendation should be weighed with no little favour, and have therefore commanded that her Institute and her motives should be immediately taken into consideration."

At once Mary was ready with her Memorial, and presented it to the Sacred Congregation. It was a clear, concise statement of her desires, with no attempt to disguise the plan of the Institute. Many of her friends counselled prudent wording, impressing upon her the necessity of being content with the gradual attainment of her object. They urged her to feel her way with the Cardinals, pointing out that their minds were not prepared for a great departure from the beaten track. But such advice fell on a deaf ear. To Mary God's will seemed clear, and she determined to deal with the Holy See with perfect simplicity.

Briefly summarised, this second Memorial asked for the members of the Institute :

1. The Rules, Constitutions, and manner of life of the Society of Jesus, as far as the diversity of sex permitted.

2. Their recognition as Religious, with authority to admit to probation and profession according to the practice of the Society of Jesus.

3. The special protection and immediate jurisdiction of the Holy Father without the intervention of Bishops.

These petitions, the last excepted, sound no new note in our ears; but, as we have seen, the discipline of the Church was other then than now. Though, had the Institute been helped by the most favourable circumstances—the concurrence of the English clergy and of the Jesuits, good reports from without, union within—it might possibly have been approved. The Holy Father had expressed himself most willing to show it favour, and the first sittings of the Congregation of Regulars were encouraging.

Was Mary herself ever hopeful about the immediate issue? We can hardly think so. The light she had in prayer argued rather of failure than success; a path, toilsome, dangerous, but leading at length to the fulfilment of her desires. How far she would see the realisation of these desires mattered little to her. God's will for the present was all she cared for.

Leaving her Memorial with the Cardinals, Mary betook herself to another ecclesiastic whom she believed she had orders to visit—the General of the Society, the keeper of those Constitutions she so much admired. To one with less spirit and less simplicity such an ordeal would have seemed formidable enough. Father Mutius Vitelleschi had thought right to issue peremptory orders to his subjects in England forbidding them in any way to mix themselves up with the new congregation. They were not even to teach catechism in schools of the Institute. This was a stern command, and known to Mary. Still, she showed no sort of reluctance to the visit. What happened in this interview, so highly interesting to us, we do not know. To Mary personally the General showed himself kind and sympathising, to her work coldly distant.

Four sittings were held by the Sacred Congregation. Then there was presented to the Cardinals by the Rev. J. Bennett, agent of the English clergy in Rome, a document in which Mary's congregation was censured in the strongest terms. This censure, or, at least, the bitterly unjust language in which it is couched, was one of the fruits of the painful misunderstanding that existed at this time between the seculars in England and the Jesuits.

Mary Ward had the misfortune to be looked upon with suspicion by certain members of both orders of clergy. The seculars supposed her to be abetted by the Jesuits for their own ends: "*The Jesuits disclaim openly, but I know they assist underhand,*" wrote Bennett to the Bishop of Chalcedon, Dr. Bishop, in 1622. And, on the other hand, the conduct of the General of the Society as stated above, and the yet more stringent orders issued later, prove how little favoured she was by the Jesuits as a body. From this two-sided opposition, and the party spirit animating each, came the culpable and inculpable misrepresentations of the designs of the proposed congregation which, with its demands in advance of the times, forced upon the Holy See the decision it eventually took.

A brief summary of the indictment laid before the Cardinals runs as follows:

"1. It was never heard in the Church that women should discharge the Apostolic Office.

"2. The Institution is contrary to the decrees of the Council of Trent. (Non-inclosure, dismissal of subjects.)

"3. The members arrogate to themselves the power to speak of spiritual things before grave men and priests, and to hold exhortations in assemblies of Catholics and usurp ecclesiastical offices.

"4. It is feared they will run into errors of various kinds."

The document winds up with epithets. The members are called in scorn: "Jesuitesses," "galloping girls," "a shame and a scorn to pious people," "a scandal and disgrace to both Catholics and heretics," etc.

No evidence nor witnesses were adduced in proof of these four statements, but they were only too much credited by the Congregation. In self-defence Mary could do nothing. Her friends were at a distance, as also was the scene of the alleged disorders. Communication was difficult, well-nigh impossible. She waited, therefore, the issue of events.

One day it was intimated to her that the Cardinals were agreed to decide against her Institute. Instantly she handed in a petition to their Eminences asking for the suspension of the decree and permission to remain with her companions in Rome, to prove by their way of living that the plan of life she proposed would be for the glory of God and the good of souls.

This was a daring move on Mary's part. Not by argument nor by patronage would she save her Institute. It should stand on its own merits or fall. Her children's virtue, their zeal for souls, their edifying lives, should plead their cause. Under the eyes of the Cardinals, whose ear had been gained by unjust opposers; in the Holy City itself, where tradition of old clings like incense in its churches—there she would approve her congregation, if it was God's will.

The petition was granted, and Mary's work in Rome began. Her first step was, as at St. Omer, to open for the lower classes a large free school, where the children were taught, besides religious doctrine and the ordinary branches of learning, many useful kinds of manual work, to enable them to earn their living when they left school. Little ones from Rome and its suburbs flocked joyfully into the English house, as they had done at St.

Omer. They left their play by the bubbling fountains, and their rest in the deep shade of the narrow streets, to learn in the school of the English ladies. From the children the good influence spread to the grown-up sisters and brothers ; the fathers and mothers blessed the good nuns for their devoted kindness and generosity. Winefrid Wigmore, writing of this time, says : "The effects which the labours of our Mother and hers had in a short time, forced the wicked to say openly that, if this went on, the bad houses in Rome would soon go to ruin."

But, if the community taught gratis and relieved the poor, they themselves were suffering absolute want. It was all they could do to provide money enough to pay for the roof over their heads. And they could not beg. There was so much suspicion felt about them in the city, so many enemies whispering abroad, that Mary dared not confide to any their pressing needs. Beautiful as their lives were, they were unusual. The Romans asked what these strangers were. If nuns, why did they not stay at home and say their prayers? If not nuns, why did they wear a dress peculiar to themselves? Any way, if they were ladies of rank, they had no business to demean themselves by walking in the streets like common peasants. Such being the temper of the people amongst whom they lived, it was not surprising that they kept their poverty secret and gave no cause for complaint by asking alms.

Some good friends, however, Mary made. The nuns of the Torre dei Specchi, Oblates of St. Frances, behaved with sisterly kindness towards her and hers. They received them into their

house for a time and taught them Italian, meanwhile praising enthusiastically their manner of life, some going so far as to say that if they had known Mary sooner they would have joined her company.

There was another cross in the house harder than any poverty. In the infirmary lies Barbara Ward, Mary's sister. She is dying, going Home fast. Separation is hard for the devoted little band, bound together by tender love and common interests,—hardest of all for Mary. Yet never a word of complaint, never a sigh escapes from that brave heart. She sleeps in the sick-room, and spends every free moment of the day with her dying sister. Her presence is Barbara's chief delight. The wan face lights up when Mary enters. As she sits by the bedside we trace the family likeness in the two faces, though Barbara's features are sharpened by disease. In character, too, they are alike: in both there is the same energy, courage, and cheerfulness, the same intense zeal for God's honour and glory.

Of Barbara, Margaret Horde, a fellow-traveller on their Roman journey, writes, in loving admiration: "If we were weary she was ready to animate us, if sickly willing to serve us, if dismayed she thought to comfort us, if melancholy she had ever some pretty jest, well seasoned with virtue to recreate and make us merry. Especially when we came to our inn, it was her custom to be exceedingly pleasant, and after she had used her charity to all, she set herself with all care and diligence to help and recreate our Chief Superior, whose health she tended more than her own life, and would never be wanting in any occasion to serve and help our dearest Mother. Thus while she served

others she neglected herself, and like a true scholar of such a master trampled all difficulties under her feet. Never was she heard in all her journey to complain of anything whatsoever, whether fair weather or foul, hot or cold, crosses or contents, sickness or health, plenty or want, lodging or none, still our champion remained the same, so commanding her own passions, as she never gave the least sign of dislike in word or countenance, though never so great occasions were offered unto her."

Where is there comfort and help in sorrow like that found in the Catholic Church! The poor dying stranger in Rome, foreigner though she was, became participator in the Masses and prayers and mortifications offered by the religious communities in the Holy City. The General of the Society of Jesus, rigid where there was a question of prudence, had a notice put up in the sacristy of the "Casa Professa" that all might remember Barbara Ward in their prayers. "Some twelve or fourteen days before her death," writes Winefrid, "Mother Chief Superior put up a great candle before the body of St. Ignatius, which when it was burned, the Fathers themselves supplied the same and kept it burning till she was dead, and in the monastery where she had lived (Torre dei Specchi) they kept continual *Quarant' ore* of prayer for her, the religious daily making disciplines, fasting, vows, and other devotions and mortifications to recover her health. Neither wanted she charity in other religious houses, who continually importuned Almighty God for her health and life."

Barbara "daily grew weaker and weaker until her body became a mere atom, nothing left thereof

but skin and bones." She received the Last Sacraments, distinctly answering all the prayers. On the 25th January, 1623, the end came. About four o'clock in the morning of that day she awoke after a long sleep, took some refreshment, and said she felt faint. Mary, asleep in the same room, was called. She found "her dearest Sister in her agony, and great drops trickling down her face, with her eyes towards Heaven most firmly fixed on the Holy of Holies, as we may probably think, pronouncing these words, leisurely and distinctly with a longing voice: 'O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord!' and thus she continued for a *Miserere*, all her whole powers of body and soul so fixed upon God that it seemed clear unto us all she enjoyed the Divine Presence and had a most clear sight thereof as appeared by her looks overwhelmed in Him, so that she had forgotten all worldly affection, even her whom she had always loved better than herself. Mother Chief Superior bid her call upon Jesus, which she did saying, 'Jesus, Jesus, Je——,' not being able to pronounce the word, and inclining down her head gave up her happy soul into the hands of the Owner Who had bought it with His own most Precious Blood, and now for her greater consolation had come in person to fetch it away. So composed and quiet, neither moving hand, foot, head, eye, mouth, or any other part of her body, and so gave up her ghost in as great quietness as if she set herself to sleep."

With loving hands Mary closed her sister's eyes, and lovingly composed the body for the long last rest. Then, turning from the sick-room, she "despatched letters to all the Fathers' colleges in

Rome, and to divers other convents and monasteries to crave charity for her. And God so concurred that she had the same in a most ample manner, for notwithstanding that there died one the same morning, which had given three thousand crowns to the Casa Professa but a few days before, yet Father General gave order that all the Masses should be said for our Mother, and the benefactor served next day. Great store of Masses and prayers was said for her in divers other places, every one lamenting her death, even those who had never seen her. In the English College all the Fathers and priests said their Masses for her, and the scholars and others their beads. High Mass was sung and the Offices of the Dead."

CHAPTER XI.

". . . little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."—WORDSWORTH.

WITH an earthly comfort the less, Mary took up her daily work again. Great though this was, it did not suffice for her energy. The thought of the needs of other great cities, the hundreds of children elsewhere waiting for instruction, roused her to new exertions. After much prayer, she resolved to go to Naples and found a house there. Of "the cold bare earth of human prudence"* Mary had little. There was scarcely money in the common purse to buy food, the journey to Naples was long and dangerous, her companions were few and overworked. Yet she did not hesitate. To save one soul, to put one child on the road to Heaven, would have quite repaid her for all her trouble.

In May she set out on foot for Naples with Winefrid Wigmore, who describes the journey as follows: "Her companions were a lay-sister, a priest, and a gentleman, who took it for an honour to partake of her holy labours and were the same that came with her on foot to Rome, having, however, learned by experience that she had little need of any assistance they could give her. She was so far above the necessities of much baggage, sumpters, carriages, etc., as besides what each one carried for themselves, one serving-man that she had, carried

* Wiseman.

the rest, which did not overburthen him, for she knew well how to join the heart of a mother with the authority of a mistress. With this suite and this humble pomp, she entered the superb and noble city of Naples, and, knowing no one, took lodgings as other strangers do, when, falling sick, a friend procured her the loan of a house in good air, but unfurnished, and nothing but bare walls. There she lay on a straw bed on the ground."

Mary stayed till November in Naples. She then installed Susannah Rookwood Superior, leaving with her Margaret Genison (niece of Father Gerard) and Winefrid Wigmore. The greater number of Mary's letters date from the year of this foundation—1623. From them and from their answers we get a glimpse into the very heart of the community. The following is from Mary to Barbara Babthorpe—"Mother Provincial of Liège, or elsewhere." It shows how pinched the poor Foundress was for money.

"SOLI.*

". . . Will you not make over to Rome without delay, taking it out of their monies who had it, or where else you can, Mr. Lee's £30. I was marvellous sorry it was so intercepted, he hath not a shirt to his back, etc., as you may well believe, as we want many times meat and sometimes bread and drink to give him, much less clothes. Good Mother, hasten this £30 to him. You do conceive I have other sufferings and needs not to see a friend so painfully and publickly suffer for our cause, indeed his patience will have a great reward.

* Corresponding to the "Private" of our day.

When shall I hear ours are out of Leig and settled elsewhere, and those on the way I have writ for? Can you neither get from England or borrow elsewhere, one twenty or thirty pounds to send me when Mr. Lee's comes; you need no more words if it be possible. If not, be you not likewise afflicted, to live or die for God is equal gains, when His will is such. Farewell, my dear Mother. It is yet so hot as that we have not begun to teach, nor are we yet formally begun at Naples, but the rains is all cause of our stay. Jesus be with you, pray for me. . . . I forget not you, commend me to all.

"Wholly yours,

"MARIE WARD.

"Naples, September 16, 1623. For God's love moderate your labours so, as you lose not health."

The following letter to Winefrid at Naples shows the pain that separation caused:

"I. H. S.

"My Rev. Mother, and dear child: According to the measure of the affection I do and ever shall bear you, you might have some feeling of our parting: but my wants were, and are so many as my absence can be no loss to any: but for yours particular, God I trust will in short time so provide as that you may be in place to receive all the good in me to do: and this for the greater service and honour of God, and next for the love I bear you and to satisfy my desire of your great and eternal merit. I have been forced to keep my bed or lie upon it this nine or ten days with a swelling or

bruise, which puts me to extreme pain, but now it begins to break, but will hinder me I doubt from stirring abroad this many days; but *Dio é patrono*, as you are wont to say. When I am well and able to go abroad you shall hear more of all businesses. I am sorry to charge Mother Superior so much with the payment of letters; but patience. Commend me to all friends. Adieu, my dear child. Jesus ever keep you.

"Yours,

"MARIE WARD.

"Rome, 9ber. 25, 1623."

It can be no matter of wonder that Bishops in Italy, and on the Continent generally, should be eager to have in their dioceses an Institute whose occupation it was to teach the poor free of charge, and to visit and instruct the sick and dying. In days when nuns were not available as teachers, it must have been a puzzle how to get poor girls thoroughly taught their religion or anything else. When, therefore, Mary came with her offer of free schools, it was gratefully accepted wherever prejudice and slander had not been beforehand. At St. Omer, Liège, Cologne, and Trèves the Institute was flourishing, and, as we have seen, there were houses at Rome. Next came an invitation from Perugia. The Bishop, Monsignore Comitoli Napleone, a man distinguished for his piety and learning, wrote offering Mary a house and a warm welcome in his episcopal city. Mary's hands were full, but his Lordship would take no refusal, and, after some delay, the house was accepted. Whilst negotiations were being carried

on Margaret Horde wrote the following letter to Winefrid at Naples :

"Revd. my truly dear Mor.,

"I think Mother Chief Superior will not have time to write unto you, as she intended, wherefore these few lines are to tell you how she doth : (the knowledge of which is more to us both than all other news whatsoever). She is at present not very well, her pain is caused, as I think, partly through sitting in the church on Christmas night, and partly by her much writing and businesses, of that nature they were when she was with you.

"I will no more tell you that we are going to Perugia till we are gone, for Tuesday was once determined but now deferred, so that when it will be I know not ; if we go on Tuesday that pistole [a gold coin worth 13s. 9d.] Mor. Supr. sent must buy meat by the way, for she intends to go on foot : if we stay longer it shall be spent on *Pistos* [food for the sick] as the giver desires: God reward good Mor. Supr., many more may she give. [The rest is torn.]

"Dec. 30, 1623."

On the back of this half-sheet is written in Mary Ward's hand :

"My dear Child,

"I would have writ you some few lines, but Sre. Octavio of Perugia hath so plied me with letters this morning as I want time, but I have no great solicitude how to give you content, whose content is my ease. Be very careful of your health, carry yourself like a mother in care and

religious affection to all under your charge, particularly to Mor. Marg. Genison, to whom you must commend me. I beg both your prayers. Jesus keep you.

"Yours,
"MARY WARD."

This and many of the letters which have come down to us are mere fragments. The times were full of peril. It was dangerous to write and dangerous to keep letters. The English Government paid away large sums of money to spies whose business was to intercept letters and papers abroad. The consequence is that in letters which have come down to us we find whole sentences blotted out, and beginnings cut off. Proper names are suppressed, and notable persons disguised under ridiculous nicknames. In many cases the meaning is quite obscured.

Still, notwithstanding their maimed condition, there is a charm about Mary's letters which no amount of description could supply. They are self-forgetting, cheery, gladsome even, and that when her heart must have been wrung with sorrow. The year 1623, for example, was one of the saddest of her life. Yet there is almost a gaiety in her letters. Perhaps, like some others, she found a jest easiest when the heart aches most.

Perugia is about seventy miles from Rome, and lies in a mountainous district, not particularly easy of access on foot. In 1624 Mary set out with a few pistoles, the gift of her generous children at Naples, who, though so poor themselves, could not bear to hear of their Mother taking to the highway

with a single coin in her pocket. Her little company this time consisted of Margaret Horde, Mary Clayton, Hester, a lay-sister, Father Henry Lee and Robert Wright. They reached the town on the feast of its patron, St. Constantius, January 29th, and were received by the Bishop in his pontifical attire, with his attendant clergy, who sang the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for their arrival. Then an ode, composed by the saintly Bishop specially to commemorate the happy event, was recited, and their guests were accompanied with honour to their new home. But not even the holy Bishop nor his warm-hearted people discovered how absolute was the poverty of their guests. The house, which was the gift of his Lordship, was scarcely habitable, wanting windows and doors. "We are as poor as Job," Mary writes cheerfully; and a few gold pieces sent from the more flourishing house at Naples were looked upon as a present from Heaven.

In a letter to a priest she gives, in a few graphic touches, an excellent sketch of what we self-restrained English would call the *gushing* welcome of the good Perugians. The letter is to Father Coffin, S.J., Confessor of the English College at Rome, and shows, by its familiar allusions, that the Father was an intimate friend of the "English Ladies" at Rome.

"I. H. S.

"As I am most secure of your Reverence's true desire of best success in these and all other businesses, so had I ere this acquainted you with our safety in Perugia, kind entertainment and what we here find, had there not been immediate

hindrances, partly by a sudden fit of illness which prevented the post one week, but principally by everlasting visits of these *Sigre Perugiane*, who are superabundant in their compliments, and their discourse not only eloquent but of such continuance that our chamberful of them beginning at 19 are scarce at 24 [1 p.m. to 6 p.m.] come to their usual conclusion, *Se non occorre niente V.S. mi commandi, fin al sanque La servirò.* But to my purpose, and first of our journey. The weather was so sharp and the wind so boisterous, especially amongst the mountains, that Mother Minister and Mary Clayton being weak and Hester not well, we could not without prejudice to their health make long journeys, so were on the way five days and a half. The next day after our coming Mgr. Vescovo sent his coach with Mgr. di Casa, secretary, and *staffieri* for us to come to his palace, where himself received us with great compliment and much courtesy, spending some two or three hours in discourse of our practice and manner of life, in all of which he seemed to take much gust and satisfaction. The last Sunday we were with him again (sent for as before) and as much contented as at first. I daresay the good old man loves and esteems us very much, and desires our settling in Perugia with his whole heart, but he hath people about him and certain favourites in the town, who will, I fear, keep him from doing much for us, yet man proposes and God disposes, Whose wisdom we shall experience in time. The house and church which the Bishop hath given us we have seen, and I wish that ours had the like rent free in Rome. The air and situation are so good as to make the inhabitants live many more

years than they could in your gross and muddy Roman air. The said house the Bishop hath given order should be accommodated fit for our use, and I think some day this week we shall take possession. Twice I have been hindered by visits writing this letter! God knows how it hangs together! Your Reverence will not forget her in your holy memories, whom you know so unable to discharge what duty requires, and with your leave I will here present my due respects to Rev. Father Rector [Father Thomas Fitzherbert], whose health and happiness God conserve many years. And so for the time I ease your Reverence's troubles.

"Your Reverence's ever humbly,

"MARIE WARDE.

"Perugia, Feb. 6, 1624."

The following scraps of correspondence between Mary at Perugia and her companions in Rome and Naples are interesting, because they are homely little sketches of religious family life. Very homely they are compared with the "Elegant Epistles" of this period which have been published, and which make us congratulate ourselves that Mary and her companions (Margaret Horde, perhaps, excepted) did not aim at elegance, but, rather, wrote as they thought and spoke, with the object of being understood. As a contrast to their simplicity we may quote the following passage from a *familiar* letter by James Howell (1635): "I make a scrutiny what peccant humours have reigned in me that day; and so I reconcile myself to my Creator, and strike a tally in the exchequer of Heaven for my *quietus est.*" In other words, he examines his conscience.

In the midst of much business Mary writes to Winefrid: "As things stand with us here in Perugia I have not a moment now to speak. This very day I have so much to write to all parts as little remains for you. Yet not less than you are content withal." Still she finds time for the following:

"Now I have a business to recommend unto your careful despatch, which is the safe and speedy delivery of the enclosed. It is to one of the Society there in Naples, a man of unknown sanctity, and it comes from a secular priest, a great servant of God, and friend of ours here at Perugia. I think this good Rector hath writ in that letter some things that nearly concern his own perfection and progress, because he being very good and having withal so great an esteem of that Father to which his said letter is directed, is likewise so very solicitous that this his letter should be safe and soon delivered, and he counts every minute till he have an answer to it. Give it yourself to the said Father if you can, and solicit an answer as soon as it is possible, and enclose the said answer in one to me. For this good Rector deserves well of us for his goodwill and some courtesies, and most because he is one God loves. I had little time to write so much of this if the handling of it were not to purpose. Adieu, our Lord Jesus be with you, ever and all."

When recovering from her sickness she says: "To write a few lines at this time would hurt me; I am not sick, only my head, which will quickly pass." Then, as if afraid that anything should be kept from her on account of her health, she adds

gaily: "How stands or advanceth your work, is my presence needful, or desired by any externs, and whom? You are to speak really in all, without respect to my health or not health, or whatsoever other respect, all those things are to be left to God and by me to be considered or determined."

One day the post brought sad news. Susanna Rookwood, Superior at Naples, had been "recalled." Her illness was short, her death happy. But the loss of so loyal and devoted a member was hard at that time. Amongst the Bavarian archives is a copy of the notice which was put in Susanna's coffin: "Susanna Rookwood, a noble English-woman, aged 41, one of the first of our Society, lived in it fiveteen years. She was for three years Superioress in England and there suffered much for the Catholic faith, being five times on account of it arrested by heretics and detained in prison. She converted a great many souls to God, and strengthened many in their faith. Afterwards she went to Rome with Mother Mary della Guardia [Mary Ward], our Præposita General, for the confirmation of our Institute. At last, being sent in October, 1623, as Superioress at Naples, having lived a most holy life in that city and having left behind her a great example of sanctity and prudence, she happily fell asleep in our Lord on May 25, 1624."

Winefrid Wigmore had a younger sister called Elizabeth. They had been separated for many years, and a coolness had sprung up between them. About this time Elizabeth wrote to tell her sister that she was going to enter the Benedictine

Order at Ghent. Mary forwards the letter to Winefrid, and with it the following motherly note:

"The enclosed is first one to you from your sister Elis., of whose former unkindness you must take no notice, but far the contrary, answering this her letter very substantially, kindly and cordially. . . Beg her to pray you may be wholly His, and assure her of your poor ones, desire that you may now and then receive a line from her, and so with dearest affection bid her a thousand times farewell. Let your subscription be, Your more than ever loving sister, Win. Campian; your superscription, To my dearly esteemed sister, Mrs. Catherine [Catherine in religion] Wigmore. That copy of my Lady Abbess'es to me I send you, only that you may know how and what businesses passeth. You may show all that paper to Mother Margaret Genison, whose to Mrs. Vaux I have not yet sent, because I like them not so well as some others I have seen her write; when I see her we will compose a better. I have her long *soli*, but not yet time to read it; commend me heartily to her. Jesus be with you. Tell Father Pollard, the Scotch Father, that I have his kind letter, and thank him for all his courtesies and goodwill to advance that beginning. I would write again to him, but that I hope shortly to come. Adieu.

"Yours ever,

"MARIE WARDE.

"Perugia, 7ber. 10, 1624."

A little note like the following shows Mary's independent spirit when a request was made involving an encroachment on the rules of the house.

Father Corcione was a warm friend and had greatly helped with the Naples foundation; still, even his request must be refused if a principle was at stake. It likewise contains a bit of domestic economy.

"Your denial of Father Corcione to have any *devotees* live in your house, was as it should have been; our colleges are only for our own. In your last which I had some hours ago, of the 12 July, you ask if you may not admit the young widow her daughter . . . to live in your house in her *beata's* clothes. Yes, admit of her so on the day of our Blessed Lady as she desires, and let her not be idle, set her to writing, reading her breviary, work, or what you judge best and may busy her to the purpose. For her bed I see not how you can do less than ask her mother one for her, she knows you are in a beginning and unprovided, besides that bed you may tell her will serve when she shall be a novice, all such being to bring their beds with them. For so many crowns a month as others give, perchance it will be better not to exact any certain sum for that time, but leave it to their courtesy, they coming to know by some other means after or before, as occasion serves, what others give."

It was about June of this year that the malady from which Mary was suffering became terribly aggravated, and she was ordered from Perugia to the baths of San Cassiano, about seventy miles away. Whilst there, she met Cardinal Trescio, whose life was despaired of. He was cured through her intercession, and Winefrid gives the following account of his cure:

Mary "resolved on a pilgrimage, called our Blessed Lady of Monte Giovino, sixteen miles off S. Cassiano, in the way of Perugia, where as soon as arrived, which was about two of the clock in the afternoon, she procured the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed, when she put herself to pray and continued for four hours. Which ended, she turned herself to her companions and said, 'I have no more to ask, the Cardinal either is mended, or dead.' In fine, ending her prayer [with another hour] she went to her lodging to take some nourishment, being fasting till then. When the servants had eaten, she showed her desire to know how the Cardinal did, which was enough to the man who then served her, who was a most faithful servant, to offer himself to go immediately, as he did, walking nearly all the night so as to arrive in the morning at the baths, where he found all ready for a journey and the Cardinal upon immediate departure, which to him seemed a dream, nor could he believe his own eyes. But in effect so it was. At seven o'clock the evening before the fever left him, and all other pains which he had in great extreme, so as he was now able to make his journey to Caprarola, where he stayed all the heats."

No wonder that this incident "wonderfully increased Cardinal Trescio's devotion to the blessed servant of God," as Winefrid puts it.

Mary's prayers won other favours. One of her companions, Elizabeth Keyes, was stricken with fever. Mary prayed for her with intense earnestness, and with so good a result that the doctor —"and he the most knowing in that famous university"—coming to see his patient in the

morning, would not believe her to be alive—much less cured.

In July, about six months after Mary's arrival in Perugia, she was able to tell Winefrid of the progress of the foundation :

"We have now leave for Mass in our chapel, but not as yet the Blessed Sacrament, but that also will come in time. Mother Joyce I intend to make Superior here ; for other officers, or how many, I have not as yet determined. To Naples I will bring or send, but I intend to bring them so many as I can, and those handsome* and good. Tell Mother Margaret her best uncle is wed, and would by all means that she write out of hand to Mrs. Vaux† and her other friends in England some very good letters. I perceive the former never came to their hand. Let her write such letters and send them me and I will convey them. With Mr. Rookwood I sent the writing about her money, giving him the best intelligence how it should be sent us. Hers to Mrs. Vaux would be a good one and well writ, both which she can right well do. Tell her from me, yourself hath a sister to come to the nuns' monastery at Gand [Ghent], whom Father Tomson [*alias* for Father Gerard] will make write to you. I will direct you how to answer them.

"Adieu, yours all,

"MARIE WARD.

"Perugia, July 23, 1624."

When the autumn came the saintly Bishop of

* Handy, fit for work.

† Probably Father Gerard's friend.

Perugia died, and Mary left the city to return to Rome. Gregory XV. was dead, Urban VIII. reigning. He was benign and easy of approach, and Mary determined to go to Frascati, his summer residence, to ask in person for the confirmation of her Institute.

CHAPTER XII.

"The mercy of God is beautiful in the time of affliction." —*Ecclus.* xxxv.

MARY describes so graphically her visit to the Holy Father at Frascati, in a letter to Winefrid Wigmore, that we cannot do better than quote it in full:

"For the Reverend Mother, Mother Win. Campian,
Vice-Superior of ours, Naples.

"Dear Win,

"Something or other still makes me be brief with you: now the cause is only my own mistakes of the time, thinking the post of Naples had also gone at night as others do, when now they tell me they think the hour of sending by this is already past. Well, my Mother, I have divers of yours, their date I have not time to look, their contents are contentful, and nothing in them but what is grateful. I will within a few days write thanks to Doctor Allen: when I come to you is uncertain, the cause you will say is most reasonable. Some days since His Holiness went to Frascati, and I, accompanied with Mother Margaret Horde, Mother Elis. Cotton, and Mother Mary Poines [Poyntz] (your cousin), went privately (I mean without acquainting the Fathers or others out of our own house) to seek audience of him there, which was obtained without our obligation to any but ourselves. I told His Holiness we were come to supplicate that he would confirm on earth that

which had been confirmed in Heaven from all eternity, that the confirmation of our course was that we did require: that the same course had been this sixteen years, was practised in so many several countries and cities, that had been approved by Pope [Paul V.], with a promise of confirmation, that till it were confirmed the parents of ours would pay no portions and that thereby we suffered, I mean all ours, in extremity, that in this sixteen years the most orders in God's Church had endeavoured to hinder us, etc. He answered mildly that he had had notice of us, that of himself he could not do it, that he knew our business had been treated of, and that at his return to Rome he would be informed how all stood, by such Cardinals as had dealt in the matter. I requested that if he would commit it to Cardinals to be discoursed of, that it might be to some few, not such a number as before, etc., declaring withal that several of those who had this business in treaty before, were very adverse, had misunderstood the nature of that Institute, and having delivered their opinion thereabout accordingly would never after seem to be removed, etc. I besought him most earnestly to recommend the matter to God, for to God and His Holiness we did wholly commit it. His last words were, that he would do in it as God should inspire him. Then I gave him the long memorial which you know containing the substance of what we desire. The manner of his carriage was very pleasing and grateful: his countenance very contentful and [as] though he had neither been disgusted, nor had a desire to give disgust. Coming away, I asked him for a chapel in our house at Rome, which he immediately conde-

scended unto, saying of himself, that he would at his return to Rome give orders to Card. Mellino about it.

"The particulars of this discourse with the Pope, none, Fathers nor others, must know of, but only Mother Margaret, whose good and comfort I much wish in all. I am sorry for her indisposition, your care will not be wanting that she want nothing. Bid her from me be well and commend me to her. I am glad you do that work for the Gesù; but I am somewhat afraid such continual sitting hurts her, when that is done she will have some more rest. By all means let her take remedies though she should seem to have no present need. Now to my coming to you; having begun with His Holiness, and that he should stir in the matter and I absent, things would not so well, besides if that should be, I must be forced of necessity to return presently back to Rome, and so that charge lost, therefore till he be returned (which will be some eight days hence) and that I see what he will do in the business, I cannot determine certainly whether or when to come towards you.

"*Soli.* I think, dear child, the trouble and long loneliness you heard me speak of is not far from me, which whensoever it is, happy success will follow. You are the first I have uttered this conceit so plainly to, pray for me and for the work. It grieves me I cannot have you also with me to help to bear a part, but a part you will and shall bear howsoever."

There is a touching contrast between the sadness of the few lines at the end of the letter and the

childlike gaiety of the beginning. In the former, Mary Ward speaks to one who, because she is a friend, may be asked to share the burden of her trouble. In the latter, she writes as to her children in general, who are on no account to be saddened with her sorrow. It is consoling for us in our hours of trial to look upon the great heart of a servant of God in its lonely sadness, and think there have been hearts, stronger than ours and holier, who have known like burdens and like loneliness.

True to his promise, the Holy Father on his return to Rome appointed four Cardinals to examine Mary's petition. At the head of the Council was Cardinal Bandino, who had so great an esteem of Mary personally that he was heard to say, "Did it not derogate from his character of a priest, he should have cast himself at her feet and asked her blessing."

Then there was Cardinal Mellino, Vicar of Rome, a man of untiring vigilance. He was thoroughly acquainted with the case under discussion. As Prefect of the Holy City, and responsible for the maintenance of order and discipline, he had caused the movements of the new congregation to be diligently watched. "He himself told our dear Mother that he kept, not one or two, but twenty-five spies over her, insomuch as there was not what passed in or out of the house that he had not notice of." Under the circumstances the zealous Cardinal could not have done Mary a greater service, for never was the least slur cast upon the character of the religious during the whole term of their residence in Rome.

The third Cardinal was Antonio Barberini, a Capuchin friar, brother to Pope Urban; and the fourth, Corbelluzio, Librarian of the Holy See. These were the judges—learned, upright, and holy—whose only aim was to give just judgment. But outside the Sacred College there were enemies of whom we cannot say as much, who left no stone unturned to do Mary's cause a mischief. Once, and once only, in a private letter to her most intimate friend, she named an enemy with some bitterness. The Rev. Thomas Rant had succeeded the Rev. Father Bennett as agent for the English clergy in Rome, and he proved himself as adverse to the Institute as ever his predecessor had been. Of him Mary writes:

"Mr. Rant, the English priest who negotiates here in Mr. Bennett's place, makes himself hoarse with speaking against the English gentlewomen and their Institute, hath most certainly put up four memorials against us all, full of horrible lies, to His Holiness, to Cardinal Thoris, now Bishop of Perugia, and with him hath done much hurt very lately, and I am told he hath put up the same memorial to your Cardinal Caraffa also. This man hath procured that Doctor Smith, a great enemy to the Society and consequently, etc., is created Bishop and is going or gone from Paris towards England."

It was at this crisis that Mary felt the whole weight of her loneliness: so many enemies with voices loud and strong; so many accusations, and yet no witnesses who could be confronted. And not a voice to speak in her favour. She had friends, and very many, but they were in England, and

communication was slow. In Rome her friends were Italians, and could not understand the case. The General of the Society, Father Mutius Vitelleschi, as we have seen, was opposed to the new Institute, and if he did not actively take part against it, as there is reason to suppose, he certainly condemned it by his silence.

Had Mary conceded only one point—that of enclosure—she would probably have obtained all she desired from the Holy See. Cardinal Bandino, it is said, tried to persuade her to accept such enclosure as was observed by the nuns of Torre dei Specchi; "on which condition," says Winefrid, "she should have freedom to set up as many houses all over the world as she would. . . . But to this fair offer our dearest Mother gave for answer, that 'to obtain the foresaid grace of propagating, she would not admit of two stakes put in cross in form of inclosure.'"

Did this refusal come from Mary's obstinacy? Subsequent events proved the contrary. Mary, with wonderful foresight, saw that the old religious Orders would not suffice for the necessities of the times, and that the Church in God's good time would provide for the needs of her children. Whether this provision would be made by her instrumentality and in her lifetime mattered little to her. "She and they had no haste," she told the Cardinals; "what was not done in one year could be done in another. She could attend Almighty God His time and leisure, for man had to follow not go before Him."

Still, as long as she had any power to assist the movement, she worked with all the energy of her nature. "Help me with your prayers," she writes

to Winefrid; "I will follow it to the utmost of my power. There shall be no stay for me. For the rest God work His holy will." She prayed, fasted, waited. She interviewed the Cardinals separately, and presented them with documents to help them in their decision, and prove that she had acted in all things with the sanction of ecclesiastical authorities.

Amongst these documents two, of the year 1615, were of great value, being the opinion of the theologians, Fathers Lessius and Suarez. Both these Fathers were of opinion that the way of life in the Institute was holy, lawful, and good. But Suarez asserted that the approbation of the Holy See was necessary for its perpetuity, owing to the novelty of its organisation, even if only regarded as an Institute, or Congregation. Lessius, on the other hand, maintained that the power to confirm such Institutes in the Church has always been possessed by the Bishops, and they could do so in perpetuity as long as these Institutes did not assume the position and habit of a religious Order, which the Pope alone can confirm. Following this opinion, Bishop Blaise, as we have seen, had sanctioned by a brief the manner of life of Mary and her companions.

Notwithstanding the authority of these eminent theologians, the decision of the Holy Congregation, had it then taken the form of a decree, would have been adverse, as Cardinal Mellino gave Mary clearly to understand. But no decree was issued in the beginning of the year 1625. The war in the Valtelline and with Genoa, and the plague in Sicily, both menaced Rome with uncommon and awful danger, and the minds of those in power were

devoted to affairs of more pressing and general interest. The sittings of the Sacred Congregation ceased, and for a while Mary was left in suspense.

The year 1625 was a Holy Year, the year of Jubilee. In Rome the long-closed Basilica doors were opened, and the faithful from all parts of Christendom flocked to the churches. Mary and her Sisters spent hours before the Blessed Sacrament, praying for light and strength to bear their trials. "She made the resolution," says Winefrid, "to go every day for a year to the devotion of the *Quarant' Ore* in Rome, and kept it without missing once, receiving great light during this time."

Kneeling during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Madonna del' Horto, brilliant rays of light were seen to stream from the Sacred Host upon her upturned face, and she felt within herself a sense of her own utter unworthiness. At another time there was given to her the power not only of forgiving her enemies, but of loving them and doing them good. Her manner of speaking of them was kind, tender even; they were her "friends, the purchasers of her heavenly reward." Once, when praying for a man lately dead, who had done her much harm, she told our Lord that since she forgave him all his unkindness to her, our Lord would surely forgive him too. She felt within her the answer, "He has not sinned against you, but against Me." From that day she resolved to offer up her Friday Communion for her living enemies, to help them before their death.

One day Mary asked our Lord how she should

MARY AT PRAYER IN THE CHURCH OF
CHALICE THAT

. MARK, ROME: "CAN YOU DRINK THE
SHALL DRINK?"

To face p. 168.

bear her troubles so as to give Him most honour. The answer was that if she would bring Him the greatest content she must take pleasure in her sufferings and rejoice. He showed her one time, after the suppression of her schools in Rome, how poor and insignificant is all human strength and temporal power, how despicable creatures are compared with the Creator, how futile all man's opposition would be if God were to exert His will. "The prosperity, progress, and security of the Institute did not consist in riches, great position and the favour of princes, but in the free recourse of all its members to God, from Whom all strength, light and protection should come." "This grace filled her soul with extraordinary light, and with an immense increase of contempt for all which the world calls great and exalted."

About this time a temporal grace of a signal kind was granted to Mary's prayers. There was in Rome a doctor, Alphonso Ferro by name, who was ill with fever, and so restless that he could not sleep. Mary felt the greatest compassion for his suffering state, and went to visit him. "Our dear Mother," says Winefrid, "went directly to the Church called Madonna della Scala where the *Quarant' Ore* was and she applied herself with great instance to beg this man's health; and as a motive to incline our Blessed Lady to grant her petition she added, 'Give him my sleep. I will be content to want it.' After some two hours of prayer, on her way home we asked her if she had hopes he would recover? She answered, 'Yes, for she had found access, and had importuned so and so'; which was found to have the effect, for he, within an hour after her leaving him, fell asleep,

which sleep lasted three or four hours, in which he dreamed he saw our Mother kneeling before our Blessed Lady of the Rosary (which feast was kept that day) begging instantly his health, and in particular that he might sleep, on which condition she offered to give him her own rest, at which he cried out, 'O Signora! Oh! what charity!' which words he uttered so distinctly as that his wife and all in the chamber heard him, and thought he had been awake but found he was asleep. When awaking in a manner out of himself for joy, he began to say, 'I am cured, I am cured; I have no more headache, no more fever, no more drought.' And so it was."

It is interesting to notice that of the fifty pictures which compose the *Painted Life*, five represent spiritual favours received by Mary in this year. Our Lord seems to have held His two hands over her head, one filled with extraordinary graces, the other with crosses. August brought a cross, and a heavy one. The bitter and repeated representation made against her prevailed with the Cardinals, and an official notice was sent to Mary ordering her to close her schools in Rome. So far her enemies triumphed. The Rev. Thomas Rant wrote in exultation: "Their schools is tooke away, they shall stay in Rome if they will, but their habbit shall be tooke away. Their houses at Perugia and at Naples shall be undone."

Only in his first statement, however, was Rant correct. No orders were issued, as far as we know, concerning the dress of the Institute, nor at this time were its houses in Perugia and Naples "undone." The new Bishop of Perugia, it is true, was not as favourable towards the foundation as

his predecessor had been, but we hear of no serious hindrance being put in the way of its well-doing.

How did Mary receive this blow, the first of many? St. Ignatius said that were the Society dissolved as salt in water, he thought it would take but one quarter of an hour's prayer to compose his soul. Winefrid tells us of Mary that "she enjoyed as much peace as if the thing had been of her own procuring." She dismissed the children and shut up the schools without a word of regret. But if she was submissive, the parents were not. They went in troops to the Cardinal Vicar's palace, and even besieged the house of Donna Contanza Barberini, the Pope's sister-in-law and a great friend to Mary Ward, to complain "with extreme moaning" of the wrong done to their children. But their complaint was to no purpose —the schools remained closed, and the little ones returned to sleep idly in the deep shade of the streets, or play away their lives by the bubbling fountains.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Thou hast made the morning light and the sun."—*Ps.* lxxiii. 16.

IT was about nine months after the suppression of the Roman schools, and in the month of November, that Mary Ward, Mary Poyntz, Elizabeth Cotton, and a lay-sister, Father Lee and Robert Wright, set out for Florence, the first stage in one of the most remarkable journeys of Mary's life. Their destination was England, and they were laden with messages to relations and friends in the dear mother country. But England, as we shall see, they never reached.

Those were days of sumptuous equipages. Great people displayed their wealth in superb horses, in roomy vehicles lined with velvet, in a following of baggage-waggons, outriders, etc. Very little consideration or courtesy could travellers who gave no sign of rank or riches expect from innkeepers or fellow-voyagers. What were the thoughts of those men and women who met Mary Ward on this eventful journey? They saw poor clothing and scanty baggage, and marvelled that one so delicate should travel on foot. Were they moved by her gentle face and gracious manner to treat her with kindly respect and unusual hospitality? Winefrid tells us in her record of the first journey that innkeepers everywhere served her with their best, and the servants of the hostels were sorry to see her go, she had been so considerate towards them. The same kind welcome

she experienced on this journey. Indeed, far more. The letters of introduction Mary carried with her, opened doors whenever she knocked. Her sanctity and winning ways did the rest. These letters were from Cardinal Trescio, the General of the Society of Jesus (Mutius Vitelleschi), and Father Domenico di Gesù. This saintly Dominican was specially venerated by the great personages she visited, and his esteem for her was theirs. The Archduchess Mary Magdalene, Sister of the Emperor Ferdinand II., entertained Mary at Florence as a friend, and showed her "exceeding great favours." There, too, she made an acquaintance with Catherine of Lorraine, sister of the Electress Elizabeth, wife of Maximilian I. of Bavaria. From the Court of Florence she proceeded through Parma to Milan, where Cardinal Frederick Borromeo received her with fatherly kindness. He, who never admitted a woman, even a sister or a niece, within his palace gates, spent more than an hour with Mary in his private apartment, gave her at parting a pressing invitation to stay longer in Milan on her return journey, and put at her disposal a carriage to take her and her fellow-travellers to the shores of Lake Como. From that beautiful lake they crossed the Rhoetian Alps by the Bernardine Pass, and, traversing the land of the Grisons—a land dangerous to Catholics on account of the hatred of its Protestant inhabitants to the true faith—reached Feldkirch, in the Austrian Tyrol.

It was Christmas Eve, and the tired little company turned into the Capuchin church at eight o'clock at night to pray, "in as great cold as I think ever was felt," one of them writes. The clocks in the neighbourhood rung out the hours

of the night, but Mary prayed on. Not till three in the morning did she rise from her knees. Her face was sad and her words few as they went back to the inn together. Of those long hours absorbed in prayer her biographer says: "Particulars she would never tell, but in general terms that it concerned the conversion of England." Later, however, it transpired that she had wrestled for the soul of Charles I., King of England, and that God had given her to understand that every necessary grace had been offered to him, and that his correspondence alone was wanting.

Instead of going from Feldkirch through Cologne straight to England, as Mary first intended, we find her breaking her journey at this point and turning east to Innspruck. What made her so far change her plans it would be hard to say. Not fear of war raging in the North of Germany, for there was no peace in Europe, and it mattered little in which direction she travelled. Conjectures are unsatisfactory, but it seems natural to suppose that Catherine of Lorraine and the royal family at Florence would advise Mary to make herself and her Institute known to their relations at Innspruck, and to the Electress Elizabeth of Bavaria, who, together with her husband, might prove of great service in forwarding her plans. However this may have been, we find her visiting at Innspruck Claudia de Medicis, sister of the Archduke of Tuscany, wife of the reigning Archduke Leopold, brother of Ferdinand II., and entertained by them with generous hospitality. The archducal carriages took her and her companions as far as Hall, and grateful indeed they must have been for so practical a kindness. In the *Painted Life* this

Mary laid before him and the Electress the scheme of her Institute. Maximilian was a good judge of character, and he saw at once that Mary was a person of uncommon sanctity, great simplicity, and possessed of excellent business qualities. His good opinion of her was further strengthened by Fra Domenico's introductory letters, and he determined to secure her services for his people. There should be no going to England or anywhere else; fleet and trusty messengers should be sent off immediately to Cologne for as many helpers as could be spared, and Mary was to remain in Munich to see to the arrangements herself. On his part he promised to provide her with a palatial residence, make the necessary repairs, and give a sufficient endowment to meet all needs. In all these proposals Mary acquiesced, and before the old year was out the Paradeiser Haus was made over to the Sisters.

Mary wrote at once to Barbara Babthorpe, summoning her from Cologne, with her eleven companions, and bidding her use the utmost speed. "Here is such crying out for ours to come hither quickly, as that I am weary with answering that I cannot yet have answer of mine to yourself, etc. For God's love make what haste possible. (*Soli.* I am heartily glad you have that £20 from England, to the end you may have no cause of stay. I need not beg you to be sparing of it.) . . . Do not let any know what office they are like to have here, for so wanting what they expect, which they are like enough to do, they will be disgusted. No more, my dear Mother, but all happiness, and what haste you can possible. I hope Mother Mary Hazelwood comes also with you. Mother Anne

carriage is represented as drawn by six pure white prancing steeds, attended by gentlemen in livery. If so, the contrast between this splendour and the weary, travel-stained party must have been marked.

Partly by water, partly by land, they made the rest of the journey. When Munich came in sight, Mary said abruptly, "What will you say if we obtain a house here?" They made no answer, and she told them that in that town they would have not only a house, but fortune and favour.

An incident of this journey we must not omit to mention. Somewhere in Switzerland a young girl called Anna Maria Grünwalden offered her services to Mary. They were gratefully accepted, for none of the company knew either the language or the customs of the country through which they were passing. One day, as Mary was standing in a reverie at an open window in an inn, she was roused by Anna Maria, whom she asked,

"What is Munich?" The girl replied that it was the city where the Electors of Bavaria lived.

"And tell me what is the *Anger?** Are there not nuns there, and are they not called of St. James?" Maria answered in the affirmative. "Listen, Anna Maria," Mary continued; "you and I shall go there. I shall be taken there as a false prophetess, and you will become a nun in the convent." We shall see how these words were verified.

If Mary Ward and the Elector Maximilian had been old friends they could not have understood each other better than when, in the first interview,

* Anger—a common in which the convent stood.

[Gage] shall but lend her hither till the end of next summer. *Vale.* Jesus be with you.

"[Munich] Monaco, Feb. 16, 1627."

Inclement as was the time of year, Barbara Babthorpe and her companions set out at once, and made as much haste as frost and bad roads would allow. On their arrival they took possession of the "well-furnished" house in the Wein Strasse, and began a work which for nearly two hundred years continued uninterruptedly. "Not English, but angelical may rather the house be called," said a holy provost in 1776, "because those that live in it burn with the love of God. They also enkindle heavenly flames of love in those whom they bring up in their schools."* But in 1808 an Elector came who wrested the house from the religious and handed it over to the service of the State. Robbed and evicted, the Sisters continued to labour in the well-loved city with the same untiring energy of purpose as in the days of their first fervour.

There were two occasions connected with the foundation of the Munich house on which, if Mary Ward had ever felt inclined to triumph over enemies, she might innocently have done so.

"The constant friends and lovers of their heavenly gain"—this is Winefrid Wigmore's paraphrase for *enemies*—brought disparaging reports concerning the Institute to Maximilian. "He did not know who or what he entertained," he was told, "and that they had great debts." The Elector, struck with the vagueness of this and other charges,

* "Life of M. A. J., a Jesu Lindmayr," by Father J. Nock, O.S.B. Pustet.

answered emphatically, "It is the devil," and then and there settled the endowment of Mary's house. Up to that moment he had not been able to decide what would be a fair allowance. Now, with princely generosity, he ordered a sum equivalent to £800 of our money to be paid yearly to Mary and her successors, saying, when she thanked him, "The workman is worthy of his hire."

On another occasion Maximilian showed the same confidence. The Bishop of Bayreuth had in his diocese a congregation of half-formed Ursuline nuns, numbering about three hundred. He asked Mary to admit them into her Institute as professed members, without trial or training. Mary refused. The thing was impossible. To admit three hundred half-formed religious as postulants would have been hazardous enough, but to admit such a number to profession without a test of any kind was preposterous. Yet the Bishop would not see the justice of her refusal, and indignantly threatened the little community with the loss of the Elector's favour. Mary, long subject to disappointment, feared the very worst, but determined to lose both favour and fortune rather than yield where principle was at stake.

Having to leave Munich whilst the affair was still pending, she called at the Palace, and calmly put the reasons for her decision before the Elector. He listened quietly to all she had to say, and then told her of the ruin he had been asked to bring upon her and hers. "But," he added gaily, "God forbid that I should meddle with your affairs. He has given you light and prudence sufficient to guide them." Let us hope the Bishop of Bayreuth

endorsed this opinion and found elsewhere an opening for his three hundred.

Mary Poyntz, who had hardly ever left Mary's side, was the first Superior at Munich; Winefrid Bedingfield, one of eleven daughters who all but one became religious, Prefect of Schools. Of this Winefrid, Maximilian used to say it was a pity she was not a man, for she had all the qualities needed for a statesman. Mary needed statesmen as well as the Elector, and Winefrid's clear intellect and powers of discernment proved invaluable to her superiors. Two German members, Anna Rörlin and Catherine Köchin, entered the novitiate in 1628, the first year of the foundation. Both, says the chronicle, were endowed with heroic virtue. Catherine Köchin died young; but Anna Rörlin—"my Jungfrau," as Mary used lovingly to call her—earned for herself a title which every follower of St. Ignatius might envy—that of "mirror of obedience."

Let it not be supposed that even the grand foundation in Munich, with its responsibility, its field for labour, and its future promise, sufficed for Mary's zeal. Germany was destined to be the land of a long-lived Institute, and she took possession of it with both her hands. The Paradeiser Haus had been opened scarcely more than a few months when Ferdinand II., Emperor of Germany, invited her to found in his capital of Vienna. He had heard from the delighted Elector of Bavaria what good was being done in his capital, and determined that Vienna should have the like advantage. At his desire she chose a new and beautiful house in the royal city. This Ferdinand

endowed, and very soon the pupils numbered between four and five hundred, whilst the people of Vienna, rich and poor, loudly praised the "English Ladies."

The year 1627 had seen two notable foundations, and was to see a third. There lived at Presburg a Cardinal called Pazmanny, Metropolitan of Hungary and Archbishop of Brunn, and a member of the Society of Jesus. In his diocese were as many Calvinists and Lutherans as Catholics. But by gentle persuasion he gained the consent of the authorities for Mary's Institute to be established in the city. No sooner did she receive his invitation than, with Barbara Babthorpe, Margaret Genison, and an Italian from Naples, she went to take possession of the house allotted to them, and at once opened schools for all classes of the people. In July, 1628, Barbara Babthorpe writes to Winefrid Wigmore:

"Concerning our business here in Presburg. Our house is now in fitting, I would say in covering, for the top is pulled down, and the beams laid on, but not yet covered, and the rain will not expect until we can have it ended, and the old parts of the house is in accomodating, to make it more fit for our use, but not likely yet to be built anew, for the Archbishop wants money, so in meantime ordained it should be pulled down and made anew the top, that we might sit dry at home. His Illme. came to Presburg upon St. Peter's day. I saluted him by an Italian brief letter of welcome, to give him the good feast, his name being Peter. This poor letter brought us six hundred dollars.

"Concerning our schools, as I told his Illme., so I cannot tell yours better than that we have scholars

away, for the poor goes to work in the vineyards, the rich comes unconstantly, so as how many we have we cannot tell, for they were here altogether by the ovations; but as he said, so we find by experience, that we must have patience for the first few months. Said he: 'They are very backward here and ignorant, so as the chiefest thing for you needful yet is patience, and before they will come to learn these better works, you will have exercised with them great patience.' . . . His Illme. hath a true fatherly heart towards us, but not so much means as to do what he desires, for he is now a building a College for the Fathers in another place in High Hungary. He doth general good. His affection for us is most tender, for we ask him nothing, only give thanks for what we have, which pleaseth his Illme. much, he not loving a craving disposition. As he once said to the Preposito, 'I am the more careful to help them, and hold a greater memory of them than I should, because they ask nothing.' You will think this hath taught me a lesson not to be too forward to ask, for indeed it is not needful. . . . We have silent good friends. Yesterday I had eight dollars sent me, three chickens, and a little pot of milk from one lady; from another lady one ton of malt and four hard stones of salt, which here is very dear, so as God is very liberal unto us, if we were half as much with Him, how happy asking must it be! Beg, dear Mother, we may not be wanting to do the most we are asked for His sake, and then all other content is inferior to that. . . . So adieu, dear Mother.

"BARBARA BABTHORPE.

"July 20, 1628."

In 1628 an opening was also expected in Prague, capital of Bohemia. But the good there hoped for was frustrated by troubles of which we shall soon have to speak. By way of compensation, however, in a little more than a hundred years, the Institute possessed in this city a flourishing house, which still exists.

It is interesting to notice how many persons of distinction and virtue Mary Ward came across in her life, and in how many cases these persons passed on to each other the esteem and admiration they felt for her—an esteem and admiration which is the more remarkable when we consider how different in character, in rank, in interests, these men were.

To begin with our own English Father Gerard, who, it is a joy to think, was one of Mary's most devoted friends. He had known her as a child at home and as a young foundress at Liège, and all through her troubled life kept up his friendship for her.

Father John Gerard has left an autobiography, in which he tells us of his missionary life in England—his arrests, his prisons, his keepers. Of all these things—his tortures not excepted—he speaks with an appreciation which is almost sportsmanlike. Here is a touching bit:

"Thereupon we descended with the same solemnity as before into the place appointed for torture, and again they put the manacles on the same part of my arms as before, indeed they could not be put on in any other part, for the flesh had so risen

on both sides that there were two hills of flesh with a valley between and the manacles would not meet anywhere without causing me much pain. Our good Lord however helped me and I cheerfully offered my hands and my heart. So I was hung up again . . . and in my hands I felt a great deal more pain than on the previous day, but not so much in my breast, perhaps because I had eaten nothing."*

It is a delightful narrative, and shows how staunch and true a friend, how fearless a confessor, how full of the love of God and his neighbour, Father Gerard was. A description of his person has come down to us, thanks to the notorious Topcliffe, whose powers of observation seem to have been of a higher order than his literary attainments:

"Jhon Gerrarde, ye Jhezewt is about 30 years oulde Of a good stature sum what highe^r than S^r Tho Layton and upright in his paysse and countenance sum what stayring in his look or Eyes Currilde heire by Nature and blackyshe and not apt to have much heire of his bearde. I thincke his noase sum what wide and turninge Upp Blubarde Lipps turninge outwards Especially the over Lipps most Uppwards toword the Noase Kewryoos in speetche If he do now contynewe his custome. And in his speetche he flourrethe and smyles much and a falteringe or Lispinge, or dooblinge of his Tonge in his speech.

"Yor honor^s as you will comãde me

"RIC TOPCLYFFE."†

* P. ci., "The Condition of Catholics under James I." Father Morris, S.J.

† Life of Father John Gerard, "Condition of Catholics under James I.," p. clxxxviii. J. Morris.

Most people will agree with Father J. Morris when he says "the spelling of the time was reckless."

Father Gerard escaped from England in 1606 and survived his exile thirty-one years, the last ten of which he spent in Rome, where he died in 1637. He was a favourite of Maximilian I., Duke of Bavaria, Mary's friend. On one occasion when, through Father Lee, her chaplain, she had sent him good news of her German foundations, she obtained a sympathetic reply—not written directly to her, as this would have been unsafe, but to Father Lee. Only a few lines can be quoted here:

"I have kept silence to them,* as it was needful I should, and must still continue to do so, yet I have pleaded their cause where only I can avail them, that is with Him Who is best able to help them, and Who will not despise the humble and earnest prayers though of His unworthy servants. To Him, I have and do and will continue to offer my poor and instant petitions many times every day, and no day but they have a chief part in my Masses, and many times the whole when I have not other obligations. . . . God Almighty reward that worthy Duke and Duchess [of Bavaria] for their charity. It was the place I most wished they should be settled in; for besides the ample pension his worthy mind is like to give, his wisdom and way of proceeding are so known, that which he doth will be a warrant to others, that they may be sure to see that it be well deserved. Therefore all endeavours must be used to give him full satis-

* Mary and her companions

faction and choice persons placed in that house and better it were to have that house well and fully furnished than to strive and strain to erect others, though they were offered even by the Emperor. . . .

"I pray you tell your best friend and mine [Mary Ward], I do of purpose forbear to write to her, but much desire to see her here, which she may very well do, her brother [George Ward, S.J.] being here. But as for the Exercise for which she hath leave, I doubt it will not prove best. Pardon my scribbling for my right hand with much writing shakes much. Pray for your poor friend and servant in Christ Jesus.

"JOHN TOMSON [GERARD].

"Gant, this 8th of March, 1627."

Other letters from this holy man will find a place elsewhere.

Fra Domenico di Gesù, another illustrious man often mentioned in connection with Mary Ward was the intimate friend and counsellor of Popes Paul V., Gregory XV., and Urban VIII., and was venerated as a saint in all the Courts of Europe. He possessed wonderful insight into souls, was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and worked many miracles. Of his friendship with Mary, Winefrid speaks as follows: "Father Dominicus of Jesus Maria, that great and noted servant of God, a Discalced Carmelite, had her in high veneration, and would oftentimes tell us we must not be so ungrateful as to let her example pass without note, not only for our own, but others their profit." Then came words of prophecy. "He would also often tell us how much she and hers must suffer,

and would use these very words, 'That we must be trampled on, and have that dependence on Almighty God, like as the little crows left by the old ones, because not feathered like themselves' [in religious habit], and would present us the example of our Saviour's Flight into Egypt. Blessed be the hand from whence all comes! How true have we found both the one and the other!"

This good Father might justly exhort others to suffer. He had suffered himself, had prayed for suffering rather than for joy, and had experienced the sweetness brought by pain. He died at Vienna in 1630, before Mary's bitterest trial came upon her, but not before he had strengthened and comforted her to bear that or anything God might send.

The sixth General of the Society of Jesus, Mutius Vitelleschi, is too well known to need comment. We have seen that he was by no means biassed in her favour, yet there are letters extant which witness to the good opinion he, at least privately, had of her. Father Contzen, S.J., Rector at Munich, says, in a letter to the Rectors of Passau and Linz, that the General "very much commends Mary and her companions, their Institute, and the fruit thence resulting, saying that they are of singular virtue, integrity, and industry, and that it is incredible what fruit they produce in the Church by perfectly instructing young girls in piety."

Linked in friendship with Fra Domenico and Father Gerard was the great Duke Maximilian I., Elector of Bavaria. He was brother-in-law to Ferdinand, Prince Bishop of Liège, who befriended Mary in the early days of the Institute. Maxi-

milian had succeeded to his dukedom when twenty-five years of age, and had at once set himself to reform abuses, to restore finances, and revise the laws, and this with such wisdom as to merit the title of "the Solomon of Germany." As the head of the Catholic League in the miserable Thirty Years' War, he suffered and fought, prayed and conquered, with no less zeal and energy than his famous general Tilly. When he first met Mary, he had had nearly thirty years' experience of authority, and knew the needs of his people only too well. Her clear head and practical turn of mind recommended her to him. He welcomed her to his capital, stood by her in all her troubles, and sheltered her even when stricken by the Holy See.

Ferdinand II., Emperor of Germany, Mary's benefactor in Vienna, was a stern defender of the Catholic cause in days when Protestantism meant rebellion. His zeal for the true faith made him adopt a policy towards heretics which has been condemned as cruel and barbarous, but which, if compared with the measures taken by Protestant sovereigns, will be found mild and humane. In true devotion to the best interests of his people he has never been surpassed. "Were the axe and block before me, with their return to the Faith as the end, how gladly would I lay down my head for the fatal blow!" he was once heard to exclaim.

In the midst of strife, treachery, and rebellion, Ferdinand had time and thought to bestow on Mary Ward. Her foundation in Vienna was with him a personal affair. He delayed his journey with the Court to Prague until she and her companions were installed in their new premises; and

as eighteen families had to be dislodged from the house, the business took a considerable time. Nevertheless, the courtiers had to wait with what patience they could muster until the Emperor's Chamberlain and his Chancellor had seen the community safely located in their new home.

We will come back to Mary Ward now, and see her where she loved best to be—with her community, consoling, cheering, and strengthening them by word and example, and writing to the absent ones letters, or short notes full of encouragement. Here is a bright letter to Mother Winefrid Bedingfield, at Munich, written about four months after the foundation there :

"My dear Mother,

"Pax Xti,—These are indeed to chiefly congratulate the unexpected progress of your Latin schools. You cannot easily believe the content I took in the themes of those two towardly girls. You will work much to your own happiness by advancing them apace in that learning, and God will concur with you, because His honour and service so require. All such as are capable, invite them to it, and for such as desire to be of ours, no talent is so much regarded in them as the Latin tongue. The Latin hand Maria Mich. wrote her theme in, is here by these Fathers much commended, though I think it is far short of what it will be. I fear these subtle wenches have some help at home to make their themes, but you will look to them for that! Good Winn, do your utmost in this and all. This is a time of times for fidelity and true religious zeal to appear in, and

help her by your prayers, who will ever be to you the best she can. My health is bad, but will be better, by seeing such as I confide in set hard to work. *Vale*, Jesus be ever with you. Commend me to all your scholars. Yours.

"Vienna, July 16, 1627."

And this to another Winefrid, her old secretary and devoted friend, W. Wigmore, at Naples:

"My dear Winn,

"What want have I of people! Make yours fit and get more that are good, for God will not be served with other than good ones, as we find by experiences, though His mercies be such to me as to tolerate my faults. Pray for me for His sake Who will reward you. Mother Elizabeth Cotton writes at large how all goes here. I am sure the grateful prayers of our Naples House hath holpen us not a little. I must have twenty ready against I return to Naples, in these parts; look you to it. . . . Jesus ever bless you and keep you and yours."

And this to the same Winefrid, still at Naples, in 1627:

"Your weekly letters are most welcome, and it troubles me I have not time to tell you of many things which often occur touching the practice and managing of the novices of ours, which would give you much content and understanding of the best for time to come. But God, I trust, will providently dispose in this as His goodness doth in all things else. Meanwhile, I hope for great fruits and help by those you have, and therefore am continually anxious you have no

more. . . . Mother Eliz. Cotton hath a terrible double tertian: why do you not obtain health for her? I will now commend a business to your faithful performance. I would have Cecilia and Catherina to begin out of hand to learn the rudiments of Latin, fear not their loss of virtue by that means, for this must and will be so common to all as there will be no cause of complaining. I fear they work at the Roman Antipendium, and that I would not have hindered, but what time can be otherwise found besides their prayer, let it be bestowed on their Latin. *Vale*, my Mother. Commend me to Mother Jane Brown most heartily. What doth she with erysipelas now? Perchance that was the fruit of her fasts, which is like to make an end of that devotion.

"Vienna, 10ber. 1, 1627."

The last paragraph about Cecilia and Catherina's Latin might have been written in our days, when antipendiums and such like work have to be set aside for language and literature.

The following is a touching little note, welcoming Winefrid Wigmore to Rome. Mary had called her to Munich, and she was on her road from Naples.

"Dear Winn,

"You are welcome to Rome, I have long thought how I would delight myself in mine that should meet you there, which now God knows I cannot do, you will easily believe me. Come to Munich, thereof till I hear from you and you from me my poor prayers you shall have daily, and some of others that will more help and stead you. . . . *Vale*, my Mother, Jesus, Jesus keep

and conduct you. Vienna, Feb. 9, 1628. I long to know who is your companion."

At Munich Winefrid received another note of welcome from Mary, who was at Prague:

"You know I would bid you welcome a thousand times if that were needful, but neither will I as much as thank you for yours so divers so grateful letters, though they were not a little comfort. . . . My Mother, how much Dutch [German] have you? Oh, that you could speak that language but indifferent well, what would I give on that condition. Do your best with your usual diligence and God will help, for Whose honour that particular so very much imports. *Vale*, pray for poor me and look to your best cousin [Mary Poyntz] her health. What a world is this where one good must hinder another.

"Prague, May 6, 1628."

There is a story told of this time how, when the beer and wine of the Paradeiser House had turned sour and "thick as ditch-water," Winefrid, then Superior, went into the cellar and, with a cross usually worn by Mary Ward, blessed the liquor. It immediately became sweet and clear. Mary, writing soon after being told of this little incident, says:

"Are you become a brewer or maker of wines, or to say better, a worker of miracles? God's holy Providence was very particular on that occasion, God make us truly grateful. Had I known your beer and wine had been so bad, it would have troubled me more than a little. Health, my Mother, is of importance, take care according both in yourself and others."

Whilst at Eger, now called Franzenbad, a watering place in the Böhmer Wald, Mary was taken very ill of an intensely painful interior disorder. Still weak and suffering, she wrote on the back of Elizabeth Cotton's letter to Winefrid: "God reward you and all with you for your prayers, I hope I shall yet live to serve you all, though I am somewhat weak. I am glad you are better, your Deutsch will come, your diligence I know. Commend me to all. Mother Frances hers [letter] hath made good recreation to us all, and Mother Winn Bedingfield, hers is also fit to be read in the drinking such sour waters! *Vale.*"

Elizabeth Cotton reports as follows of Mary's condition: "Her fever is not wholly gone, but less, and not constant, but now and then, according as indispositions of weather and all else causes. Her weak body is soon mended. I hope all will pass well now, let your confidence be great, good Mrs. Winefrid, and fear nothing. To Mother Frances a thousand of dearest remembrances. Her pleasant letter made dear Mother merry."

Whilst getting up her strength at Eger, Mary made her annual retreat. Her resolutions ran as follows:

"Notes. August 20, 1628. St. Bernard and St. Hyacinthus their day. A great clear and quiet light or knowledge of what God doth, in and by His creatures (my poor self especially), and what they are or do towards and for Him: and these two parts, and the properties of both, so distinctly as my ignorance cannot express.

"I will begin to amend my life (God's grace assisting), that I may be worthy to do what God out of

His immeasurable bounty and goodness would have done by me, and this amendment I will now take in hand in honour of our Blessed Lady.

"Here I had a clear sight of the much good hindered, prolonged, and perchance wholly and for ever lost, with the greatest ingratitude to God, Who through immense love so ordained, and endless detriment to both doer and receiver; and this light was cause of the above-writ purpose of amendment: and I intended to undertake this work in honour of our Blessed Lady, because to honour her was very grateful to God, and because I loved her, and knew and found her very helpful and bountiful to those that serve her in any little, and so having free will to do a good, for what end I would, I gave it her, whom I humbly beseech to help me in it.

"I begin with conformity to God's will when contrary things happen, especially in all bodily infirmities, in which particular I am as yet most imperfect."

The following few lines, taken from a letter written by Father Gerard at this time to Winefrid Wigmore at Munich, will show how well acquainted he was with the doings of Mary and her companions, and how much interested in their joys and sorrows:

". . . We were all afraid the last week of Mother Chief Superior, but this week God hath comforted us with the good news of her recovery, Who I hope will preserve her for many years to all your comforts and the good of many.

"You are, then, for the present very fruitfully employed in working and promoting your schools

of both kinds, that is both of exterior qualities and interior perfections. It would be a comfort to me to know how many you have of this latter and better kind, and how you find the novices capable of the high end and perfect means which your course doth require: and how many you have, and how many scholars, and whether you teach them any Latin or music.

"These things if you mention in any letter to Mother Superior here, it will be as much as I can wish, and with less trouble to yourself. . . . I pray you to commend me to those of yours, who be of my acquaintance, but especially to my very good daughter Mrs. Frances Brooksbie and to Mrs. Bedingfield, which two are indeed very dear to me in our Lord Jesus, and I hope they will be very profitable in your company.

"Thus wishing you all happiness, I leave you to the Giver of it.

"Rome, this 13th of August, 1628.

"Your servant in Christ Jesus,

"JOHN TOMSON."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Thou also mad'st the night,
Maker Omnipotent!"—*Paradise Lost.*

WHEN sorrow visits a home it is the nursery that knows of it last. There the little ones play and sleep and eat as if there were no such weary thing. There the mother's face is bright, her talk joyous, as if her heart were not breaking. Mary Ward was a tender mother to her children, and kept from them all, as long as she could, the sad troubles that were soon to overwhelm them. But in her own heart she suffered an agony, traces of which are now and again seen in her letters. The Sisters working in England were not all she wished them to be, and in 1627 a sigh escaped her: "Alas, how do ours labour nowadays, that it is possible to lose so much grace in that poor country?" And then comes a sentence which sounds like a prophecy: "It is a pain to think how few years there remains for ours to labour in, and much more, how much there is to do in this short time and how few to do it. Pray that I may have one will with God's, and then what happens will always be welcome."

At Liège things were still more unsatisfactory. Mary had been absent six years from the community there; many of its members had never come under her influence, never even seen her. They heard reports of her ill-success at Rome, and were told by ecclesiastics whom they venerated that their congregation would never have the approbation of the Holy See. Some of these

members were unfaithful to their vocation and disloyal to their foundress, and, it would seem, attempted to substitute for her rule one of another Order. Judging these religious at this distance of time, we might be inclined to think leniently of them, and to imagine they were almost justified in quitting a congregation whose state was that of an apparently fruitless expectation. But when we remember what a cool-headed, experienced man Father Gerard was, and how many opportunities he had of knowing all the circumstances of the case, we cannot but think his denunciation of these religious warranted by fact. The letter from which the following extracts are taken was written a little later than the time of which we are writing, but alludes to troubles already rife:

"Some fancy those are in the right who would consider it just to add something to, or to take something from her [Mary Ward's] work, nay, even to abandon the commands of their Mother in order to follow the advice of a supposed friend. But woe to that woman through whom so great an evil would be introduced among you, perhaps it were better for her never to have been born, for she would not only seek her own destruction, but that of the whole Society. I assure you and all others, that if I were the greatest enemy you have on earth, I could not find a shorter and better way to efface, not only your name, but your memory from the earth, than by sowing different opinions amongst you, concerning the essential points of your Institute. Who would be so bereft of understanding and reason as to promise assistance to those who would dare to excite a rebellion amongst you, even in your first fervour and during the life

of your Foundress? Or what Pope ever would occupy the chair of St. Peter who would introduce into God's Church and confirm a religion which is in itself disunited? And this would easily happen if you give ear to all the opinions and suggestions that people wish to drum into your ears. Therefore have I told you above, that there is only one thing necessary for you, namely, that you be always of one mind amongst each other and with your head and guide, and that you maintain at all times all her rules and principles, considering them the most essential support of your Order and your personal perfection. The purer you preserve the spirit of your venerable Mother, and the closer you keep to her footsteps, the nearer you will be to God, and thus united you will be a terror to your enemies. It may be that the wicked enemy by the permission of God will for a while impede your labours; but fully to destroy what God through His servant has begun, is impossible, except you yourselves will it."

Speaking of those who abandoned the Institute altogether, Father Gerard says: "Experience showeth they left grace behind them, and carry it not with them, for I hear not of one that is fit for any good course. . . . Gant, this 8th of March, 1627."

Home troubles such as these wound deep, but there was cause of grave anxiety outside the family circle. The Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Harrach, a zealous and holy prelate, refused to sanction a foundation in his diocese unless the religious were under his jurisdiction. To be under the jurisdiction of the Holy Father alone was one

of the privileges for which Mary was contending at Rome; she could not, therefore, place herself under the Bishop of the diocese without being untrue to her principles and compromising her work in the future. The question was referred to Rome by Cardinal Klessel, Archbishop of Vienna, who, though he made no remonstrance when Mary first founded in his diocese, now joined Cardinal Harrach in his opposition.

Mary's one remaining hope lay in an appeal to Rome. But the time for such an appeal was already past. A private Congregation, held in 1628 by order of the Holy Father, had already decided on the suppression of the Institute, and issued orders to the Legates of Flanders and Germany to privately break up the houses of the congregation, and so prevent the scandal of a Papal Bull. Knowing nothing, however, of this decree, which was not carried out by the Nuncios until long after its issue, Mary left Munich for Rome about the New Year, 1629. With her there journeyed her faithful friends, Rev. Henry Lee and Robert Wright, Winefrid Wigmore, and two others.

At the time of her departure she was so ill that the doctors thought she would die before she left the city gates. At night she could not sleep, and suffered continual agonies of pain. Winefrid tells us of the provision taken for her on the road—"a little bag of oatmeal for thin water gruel, which she drank with a little salt, and this, the only food she tasted during the journey, was rejected in half an hour." "But," Winefrid adds, she set out from Munich "with as great tranquillity, joy and magnanimity as if in perfect health, and had what might ease and please nature." "They asked her once,

'if she thought she should reach home alive?' She answered, 'that there was more appearance she should not than that she should, neither did it import her where she died, in her bed, or under a hedge, so it were in her fidelity to God.' 'That she had made several general confessions, and lately one for her last, her daily communions had been for many years for her last; for the rest she was sure, lived she or died she, she served a good Master.' Thus disposed in mind and body, through God's goodness, she ended her journey with life but with pains of many deaths."

As soon as she was able to rise from bed, about three weeks after her arrival in Rome, Mary presented herself to the Holy Father, who received her with his usual kindness and told her to draw up again a memorial to be placed before two ecclesiastics whom he himself named—Cardinal Mellino, his Vicar, and the General of a certain Order, "whom His Holiness was persuaded was mightily a friend of our Mother's, but who was, in effect, wholly the contrary," says Winefrid. Very gently Mary told Urban the state of the case, but he would not believe it; she was mistaken, he said. Who was this General? Mutius Vitelleschi? We do not know.

The decision arrived at by these two eminent men was that another Congregation should be held, before which Mary might "herself be present to declare what she desired, and her reasons." This personal appeal was a unique privilege, and she accepted it gratefully, presenting herself with child-like simplicity before her judges. It must have been a touching sight: Mary, wasted by illness, prematurely aged by sorrow, yet with her spirit

undaunted and an almost royal dignity of bearing, standing before those four princes of the Church—Cardinal Borgia, the great-nephew of the saint; Cardinal St. Onofrio, a holy Capuchin; Cardinal San Sisto, Prefect of the Papal Household; and Cardinal Scalia, the Dominican, and Commissary of the Holy Office. Her relation lasted three-quarters of an hour. She sketched the outline of her Institute, its form, object, rule of life. She touched upon the work done in Flanders, Bavaria, and Austria; she mentioned the approval of Paul V., Gregory XV., and of the many Bishops in whose dioceses she had worked. Finally, she humbly submitted her cause to the decision of the Council, and promised to obey to the letter whatever order might be imposed upon her.

The Cardinals were touched by her simple words and humble demeanour. Cardinal Borgia told the Pope "that he held it to be of God, and that he neither could nor durst be against it; nor was his power enough to assist it, such and so powerful were her enemies. Therefore he humbly entreated His Holiness he might deal no more in it."

One circumstance very characteristic of Mary comes out in this relation: not a word does she say in refutation of the charges made against her and hers. And yet here was her opportunity. This was the time for her enemies to be summoned and their accusations examined. St. Ignatius, we venture to say, would have had the matter sifted to its very foundation; he would have had witnesses brought, charges heard, and judgment given; and his would have been a *holy prudence.** But

* Father Coleridge, Preface, xvii.

Mary, with as holy a *humility*, left her Institute to be vindicated by God in His own way and in His own time. And He thought good to strike it down in her life, that it might in future days bear richer and more abundant fruit.

Once Mary's business was confided to the Cardinals and her last word said, there was nothing to keep her in Rome, and much to draw back her mother's heart to Germany, or even further still—to Flanders and to England. But however "fired by love that mocks at rest"* she might be, her companions were thoroughly dismayed to hear she intended a return journey to Munich so soon. What money had she? above all, what strength? Mary laughed at their fears, saying:

"I have found out a good way to make our monies hold out—to be sure to deny no poor body an alms who shall ask it on the road!" and this she punctually observed, but at the cost of intolerable fatigue to her feeble, exhausted body. For having but one horse to ride on by turns, the most weary, she herself, made the greater part of the journey on foot, and with inconvenience such as may be imagined, in having but one pair of shoes† for the journey which did not fit her, as they were for the use of persons of very different stature." This was poverty indeed!

On reaching Munich, such bad news of the Liège house awaited the travellers that Winefrid Wigmore was immediately despatched to heal, if possible,

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* A. de Vere.

† These shoes are preserved at the Institute House, Alt Otting, Bavaria.

troubles spoken of in no measured terms by Father Gerard. Mary, in daily expectation of commands from Rome, dared not venture further from the Holy City, but awaited the good pleasure of His Holiness at Vienna, where was a Papal Nuncio, and where she could have the advice of Cardinal Pallotta, a trusted friend of the Institute.

At Vienna, to her surprise, she found all at peace —the calm before death. Cardinal Pallotta, whilst awaiting the final decision at Rome, still befriended the Institute ; Cardinal Klessel, the Archbishop, once active in opposition, now owned himself wrong in hindering so good a work. Greater comfort still Mary found in the presence of Fra Domenico. Never before, perhaps, had she stood in greater need of counsel and comfort. Her soul was in a state of such extreme desolation that she felt abandoned even by God. Prayer was difficult, impossible almost. Still, with the strength of will known only to the saints, she omitted none of her religious duties, and received Holy Communion daily as usual. With all these sufferings—physical, mental, and spiritual—we find her at this time described in the following manner :

"Those who were most about her and nearest to her, never saw the least change in word or look, nor could they observe the smallest appearance of conflict or trouble. This blessed servant of God lived most, and breathed most freely where herself was least, and esteemed it the greatest advantage to give to the Divine Majesty, since of receiving she had full assurance." Her love of mortification continued as in her younger days. She took her turn at serving in the refectory, washing the dishes,

and sweeping the house. "Her frequent disciplines and such like penances, for example, obliging herself even in extremity of weakness to kneel daily for a certain space of time, with particular fastings on occasions," were, said Winefrid, never given up. Monday was always a fast day, observed in honour of St. Anne, and she daily recited on her knees the *Laudate Dominum* in honour of the Blessed Trinity and in thanksgiving for the graces bestowed on "the holy mother of Mary and the grandmother of Jesus." This private devotion was the only one she earnestly recommended to her Sisters, begging them not to let it die out with her.

This year (1630) was remarkable in the annals of the Munich house for the admission into noviceship of nine young English postulants—fine, generous, high-spirited children (the eldest was only twenty-one)—who, knowing of impending troubles, were yet willing to cast in their lot with Mary Ward. Four of these were nieces of Barbara Babthorpe, one a niece of Winefrid Wigmore, and one (Frances by name) a younger sister of Mother Bedingfield. All of these without exception remained true to their vocation, in spite of every trial, ignominy, mistrust, poverty even to destitution.*

Amongst the oil paintings which hung for long years in the Paradeiser Haus, was the portrait, dated 1630, of a young princess, Mary Renata, daughter of Duke Albert, Maximilian's brother.

* The names of these religious were : Mary and Elizabeth Babthorpe, Barbara and Frances Constable, Anna Wigmore, Helen and Clara Marshall, Chrysogona Badger, and Frances Bedingfield.

She was represented lying in her coffin, robed in the habit then worn by the members of the Institute. She was only a child, aged fourteen years. Had she entered the congregation, or had she only longed to enter? We do not know, but the picture seems to show that the veneration in which the great and noble held Mary's Institute was not lessened by the evils which threatened it.

Peaceful as was Mary's life at Munich, the news of what was happening elsewhere wrung her heart with anguish. In the month of September, 1629, the house at Naples, once the mainstay of the poor mother-house at Rome, was suppressed. The Neapolitans, incensed at these severe measures, of their own accord sent a memorial to Cardinal Barberini, deploring the loss of "the heroic and holy labours of the English ladies, by whom the daughters of the place have been educated in all suitable arts and in virtue," and begging of him to "interpose his influence that the ladies may return to their employment, that as, by the grace of God, we have so many helps for men, this, the only one for women, may not be wanting." In their own defence the Naples community sent a letter to the Holy Father, beseeching him to clear their name from the odious charges circulated in Rome and elsewhere, and begging of him to have pity upon so many women of good birth who, by his decree, would be thrown out, homeless and penniless, upon the world.

The letter is full of spirit. "By force of repetition," they wrote, "the belief has grown up that these scandals are true, though in the place where they are circulated it is well known they do not exist. Thus in Germany, it was said, the scandals

had been committed in Flanders. The people of Flanders were of opinion they had happened in Rome (since the Order had come from thence), while in Rome, those who heard that the sentence was first executed in Naples,* were persuaded that in that city lay the seat of the evil." (Sept. 6, 1629.)

But protest was of no avail. Their friend and helper, Cardinal Buoncompagno, with the utmost reluctance performed the melancholy duty, and the Naples house ceased to exist. What a blow to the Foundress! So many of her children destitute, so many little ones with no one to teach and care for them, and she powerless to help! Would it be the last blow? Would the Cardinals, in whose hands she had left her fate, yet pronounce in her favour and reinstate her in the eyes of the world?

More than eighteen months passed before the decision of the Congregation was made known. They were months of suspense made terrible by the strength of her hope. "In spe contra spem" was her motto, and this hope, joined to her conformity to the will of God, made her strong in uncertainty and peaceful in adversity.

Rumours from Rome brought reports of a Papal Bull in course of preparation: the Institute was to be destroyed, it was said; Mary Ward was to be imprisoned as a heretic. She listened peacefully to the spreading report, and, like Blessed Thomas More, used the warning to prepare her household. "She spoke of it among them familiarly and pleasantly, and by way of pastime," one of them

* The schools only in Rome had been closed in 1625.

tells us; "and seeing that it seemed horrible to them, she represented it in a way all Divine, as very sweet, very just, and very holy, for those who would use it aright. But this grace was not given to all. One of ours, ready to burst with feeling, let slip in her presence the following words: 'I could almost take it unkindly at the hand of Almighty God.' But Mary took up her words very sharply, saying, 'If you thought so, it were impossible to love you, and beware not to let such a thought come into your mind.' On another occasion, one among them saying that 'our sufferances were dry sufferances,' she replied: 'Oh, no! they are pleasant and fruitful,' and this was said with such a heavenly sweetness and smile, as if she had indeed tasted it."

But what Mary was glad silently to bear in her own person, she could not bear without a protest for those whose reputation depended upon hers. "What concerns the sin of heresy, I do not wish any one to patiently bear being accused of it," says St. Jerome. Once more she sent a touching letter to the Holy Father. It came too late!—too late, at least, to stop the course determined upon by the Congregation of Cardinals.

"Most Holy Father,

"All that has been said and done at the present time against ours in Flanders and some parts of Germany, causes me to have recourse to your Holiness, and in all humility to lay what I now write before you for your paternal consideration. It is now thirty years since, through the mercy of God, I determined to leave the world and to apply myself to a spiritual life. Twenty-five years since I left my native

country and parents, the more to please and the better to serve His Divine Majesty. Ten years I employed in prayer, fasting, and penance, and other things suitable for such a result, to learn in what order of religion, or mode of life, I was to spend my days according to the Divine preordination. And that which unworthily I now profess, and by the mercy of God have for twenty-two years practised, was not (God Himself being my witness) either as a whole, or in part, undertaken through the persuasion or suggestion of any man living, or whom I have ever seen, but totally and entirely (as far as human judgment can arrive) ordained and commended to me by the express word of Him Who will not deceive, nor can be deceived. Who also gave light to understand and know the said state, inclination to embrace it and love it, clear demonstration of its utility, abundant manifestation of the glory thence to redound to the Divine Majesty, loving invitations to labour in the same, made efficacious also by giving strength to suffer for it, indubitable promises of promoting and perfecting it, and assurance that this Institute shall remain in the Church of God until the end of the world. By this short explanation, I pretend nothing less than to prefer such lights or inspirations before the authority of Holy Church, nor my interior assurance before the judgment and decision of the Sovereign Pontiff, but only in the present extremity in which I find myself obliged to do so, to lay all as it is before you, which having humbly set forth, if your Holiness commands me to desist from these practices, I will not fail to obey. May God in His mercy have no regard on this occasion to my unworthiness, but inspire your Holiness to

do in it what will be most to the Divine glory. *Quam Deus*, etc. This 28th November, 1630.

"Address—'Alla Santità di nostro Signore per Maria della Guardia, Inglese.'"*

Mary wrote a circular to the houses of the Institute, desiring all their inmates to yield prompt obedience to the Holy Father. These letters she handed over to Elizabeth Cotton, charging her to have them forwarded as soon as the Bull was actually promulgated, should she (Mary) be unable to see to the matter.

On February 7th, 1630, three ecclesiastics presented themselves at the Paradeiser Haus and asked to see Mary Ward. Unable to leave her room, she received them there. The Dean, Golla by name, with great agitation and a faltering tongue, told Mary he was commissioned by the Holy Office to arrest her as "a heretic and schismatic." Her hour had come. Child of a house noted for its loyalty to the true faith, bred in a holy horror of heresy, worn out in labouring for the cause of the Church, she heard herself condemned as a rebel and an apostate. Shuddering as the words of the mandate were read aloud, she made the sign of the cross, and then listened with perfect tranquillity to the rest of her sentence, smiling once when the secular arm was named as having to be resorted to should she refuse submission. "They should not require that trouble, she said; it was not fitting in her to make resistance. She would willingly go to whatever prison they desired, the more ignominious

* From an Italian copy in the Nymphenburg archives.

the better it would be. Suffering without sin was no burden."

To save her public shame, the good Dean proposed to convey her by night to the Convent of Poor Clares. But to this Mary could not consent. "By no means," she answered firmly; "the more it was known the better, it would be a wrong to her innocence to seek the darkness, she had ever loved the light, and to do all her actions in the light." So, saying one *Pater* and *Ave* on her knees, and bidding a cheerful good-bye to Mary Poyntz and Elizabeth Cotton, with no other witnesses of her departure, Mary, accompanied by a lay-sister, Anne Turner, was taken to her "prison."

The sad duty of telling the community—forty in number—devolved on Mary Poyntz, Superior of the house. "Who shall express," she writes, "the trouble into which we were thrown, when casting our thoughts on every side, we considered the weakness of her health, and the power and violence of her enemies, which cut us off from all accessible means of help except God alone, to Whom we had recourse without ceasing!" Very touching it is to think of those sorely stricken religious keeping watch night and day in their little chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, going in two by two to tell our Lord their sorrows, and begging help of Him Who alone could help in such distress. "*David and the people that were with him wept until they had no more tears*";* and a grief like his had fallen on Mary's chosen companions, and they wept those holy tears which God Himself has promised to wipe away.

* 1 Kings xxx.

The Monastery of the *Anger* was inhabited by Poor Clares, who were remarkable for the singular holiness of their lives and the extraordinary spiritual gifts of many of their number. They were not long in finding out that their house had received a treasure. One devout Sister came to the Lady Abbess and said, with much concern: "My Mother, how are we misinformed! This is a great servant of God whom we have received, and our house is happy in her setting her foot in it." But the Sisters were not free to act upon their knowledge, being strictly charged to keep Mary entirely isolated, her door double-locked. She was allowed, it is true, to write and receive letters from her Sisters outside; but, as all that passed between her and them was read, the permission was of little use. However, imitating the English prisoners whom she had visited in her childhood, Mary contrived to write unseen letters in lemon-juice upon paper wrapped round the food, clothing, etc., which Mary Poyntz sent for her comfort. By this means she continued to direct the affairs of the Institute, give orders as to the steps to be taken for her release, and comfort her forlorn companions. Many of these lemon-juice notes are still preserved in the Nymphenburg archives. In one note she gives a description of her cell:

"I had yours last night. Lest I should forget, I have little or no liquid [lemon-juice] left. We can only once a day read what you write, wanting fire. Your last papers, I cannot warm till night. . . . These religious are very respectful and charitable, and surely very good. . . . I am in a cloister, I trow, and closed up we are in one

little pretty stair on the first floor, joining upon the grot where they bury, and the deceased saints lie. Our habitation is the place of the despaired of the sick. We did it seems displace one that is every moment a dying, . . . where sometimes we fry and sometimes we freeze, and there do all that we have to do, two little windows close walled up, our door chained and double-locked and never opened but at the entrance and departure of . . . the Lady Abbess who is our chief guardian. . . . And for all this the place or chamber we inhabit hath all in it could be wished. Indeed I say true and marvel at it, but our Lord and Master is also our Father and gives no more than Lady like and what is most easy to be borne. Be sure no complaints are made, nor notice taken of all these things. Commend me dearly to all friends at home and abroad, my Jungfrau, Maria Reindorfferin, Antonina, Mother Wivell, the novices when time serves, Mother Rectrice to whom I dedicate this broken epistle, Mother Jane, Cis, Win, Jane and all. *Vale, vale.* God will reward your care and cost. You do better not to go to Elizabeth [the Electress] till she send to you or for you to the Court, but when you are sent for be very confident, loving and rather more loving and free than ever—she suffers. Feb. 13, 1631."

Another:

"By all means you must visit or let be visited this monastery three times a week at the least. I think the Abbess thinks ours are forbid to come, and now the sooner the better. If she asks you of nobility, slight hereof and never say any is noble or ignoble; go to other discourse. The more love

you show to your Superior the more you will be loved and admired. I have no end in this but our Master's honour. *Vale* to you both, but Mother Rect. by her leave shall do no corporal penance but what I first know, nor you neither. (14, at night.)

"My dear Mother, I have had great pain and lameness in one hip all over, ever since I came hither. Had yesterday and the day before good fits of my old disease: this morning have these, and yet have abundance of health and strength to spend for my Lord and Master and His service. . . . These people are so good I can never praise them enough. Use the Abbess most kindly, but take no notice of anything. . . . *Vale*, be merry and doubt not in our Master. To Mother Jane, Cis, Win, Mother Min., Mary, Bab. (From Anne to Jane with a picture. 15 Feb.)"

At the request of Dean Golla, Mary wrote another letter to all under her, enjoining prompt obedience to the Holy See. This letter, docketed outside, "Our Mother, her order to us out of the prison, to desire, etc., in her own hand: Feb. 10, 1631," is preserved with great care amongst the Nymphenburg archives, and runs as follows:

"Very Reverend my dear Mother,

"I am requested by the Very Rev. Sigr. Dean of this city of Monaco (a prelate worthy of all satisfaction) to second by these the order given yourself and all ours, of whatsoever place or province, some few days before my imprisonment (which happened on the 7th of February), which order, when I was taken prisoner, I willed Mother Elis. Cotton to write and send to all our Colleges. I have not

since seen nor spoken with any of them, but am most certain that she would not omit that or aught else so commanded. Perchance they have missed a copy. Observe, I pray you, what they contain with all promptitude and a right heart. In a secular state you may doubtless serve God much, and without your own or others' molestation, and so wishing you no less good than to my own soul, I remain, yours ever, wherein I am."

At what date the Bull of Suppression was promulgated in Munich we do not know. Nor how it came about that Mary's children there were never disbanded. That no measures to dispossess them of their home were taken, either by the ecclesiastical court or the civil arm, is certain. That Maximilian had special permission from Urban VIII. to shelter them in the Paradeiser Haus has been proved beyond a doubt by Dr. Buchinger,* the learned German historian. This permission, however, for prudential reasons, was kept a secret even from Mary herself. Hence we find in her letters hope alternating with fear as to the future of the Paradeiser Haus and its inmates.

The following beautiful bit Mary wrote on the 16th February:

"If God would have me die, I would not live; it is but to pay the rent a little before the day, and to love and suffer for God, or die and go to Him, are both singular graces and such as I merit not, and one of the two, I trust in the mercy of God,

* "Oberbayerisches Archive, 17ter Band," p. 122. Dr. Buchinger.

will fall to my happy lot. Meanwhile I will seek [to live], etc., but I would have you both not the least troubled, but beg hard that He Himself would do what Himself would have done. . . . *Vale, vale, vale.* Wise Rectrice to cry! I will not have either the Rect. or yourself in the grotto after 9 or before 6. (Sunday morn. 16 Feb., on a bag with Anne's mantle.)"

One of her opposers in Munich died whilst she was in prison, and she wrote as follows:

"I am heartily sorry for Father Ludovico; let every one of the novices say a *Dirige* for his soul. I doubt he will not go alone, yet I am daily earnest with God, in my poor manner, that He would entirely pardon all our adversaries, and let them go without further punishing them. It is good pleasing the Friend of friends and labouring in eternal works, and above all to be entirely and for ever at our Master's dispose. I say again, I will have neither of you pray after 10 nor before 6. Seven hours a-bed, and that Mother Rectrice sing *Gillion* [a bright song] or such a like every day while I am here! *Vale, vale.* (Wednesday night, 19 Feb.)"

At length close confinement in one unwholesome room acted so injuriously on Mary's health that she was brought to death's door. She was seized with a violent fever, and the doctor, alarmed at her state, ordered her to receive the Last Sacraments. But Mary was charged with heresy! And Dean Golla refused to her the last rites unless she signed a paper declaring: "if she had ever said or done anything contrary to faith or Holy Church,

she repented her, and was sorry for it." "Did His Holiness or the Holy Office require such a declaration?" Mary asked, with painful anxiety. She was answered in the negative. She refused to sign. "God forbid," she cried, "that I, to cancel venial sins, which, through God's mercies, are all I have to accuse myself of, should commit a mortal, and cast so great a blot upon so many innocent and deserving persons by saying, '*If* I have done or said anything against Holy Church.' My '*If*' with what is already acted by my adversaries, would give just cause to the world to believe I suffer justly. No, no. I will cast myself rather on the mercy of Jesus Christ and die without the Sacraments."

But lest her refusal to sign should be misrepresented, she asked for pen and paper, and wrote the following in Italian:

"I have never done or said anything, either great or small, against His Holiness (whose holy will I have offered myself, and do now offer myself, wholly to obey) or the authority of Holy Church. But on the contrary, my feeble powers and labours have been for twenty-six years, entirely, and as far as was possible to me, employed for the honour and service of both, as I hope by the mercy of God and the benignity of His Holiness, will be manifested in due time and place.

"Nor would I now for a thousand worlds, or for the gain of whatever present or future seeming good, do the least thing unfitting the dutiful service of a true Catholic and a most obedient daughter of Holy Church. Nevertheless if that, which was at the first allowed and authorised by the Supreme Pontiffs, or Sacred Congregations of

Cardinals, in which according to my poor capacity I have desired and sought to serve Holy Church, should be, by those to whom the decision of such things belong, determined (the whole truth being heard), to have been in any way repugnant to the duty of a true Christian and to the obedience due to His Holiness, or to Holy Church, I am, and ever shall be, with the help of God's grace, most ready to acknowledge my fault, to ask pardon for the offence, and, together with the public dishonour already laid upon me, to offer my poor and brief life in satisfaction of the said sin.

"MARIA DELLA GUARDIA.

"Munich, March 27, 1631."

"I have had a very ill night," she wrote next day. "This morning in hopes to confess and communicate in my bed. My head is so ill, I cannot write much, nor am I at any time free from pain. All will pass!"

Her end seemed so near that Dean Golla consented to allow the Blessed Sacrament to be taken to the poor sick prisoner. The morning of that long-wished-for day Mary wrote with trembling hand to her Sisters, bidding them come to see her: "Be constant to speak to me when you come, I will come to you, but will not stay too long, not to scandalize those who think sorrow it is that kills me and my own imperfection, not the insalubrity of the place. I will now beg my own health in earnest, and do all I can for it, doubt you not. I have had indeed an ill night, not at all in my head, but a long and strange fever." In the afternoon a Franciscan Father came to perform the Sacred Rites, and was touched to tears at Mary's devotion.

Around her knelt the Sisters of St. Clare full of reverent sympathy. In the church below her children offered up broken-hearted prayers for her recovery.

When all was over a silence ensued, and every one waited for the last sigh. But Mary's hour had not yet come. She had not yet drunk the full cup of bitterness. After her thanksgiving and a brief rest, she asked the lay-sister—Anne Turner—to help her to rise, "for she would go to her sisters in the church," she said. All in the room thought she was delirious, but with calm dignity Mary insisted, and, though contrary to the strict orders given, the Sisters carried her into the church, where Mary Poyntz and her companions were waiting in breathless expectation. There they were left alone together, and in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament those sorely tried souls poured out all their sympathy and love. We do not know what passed between them, but we can imagine Mary's sorrow at the sight of those whom she might no longer call her children, whom she would soon be powerless to shelter or protect or console, and theirs, when, looking on Mary, they saw the ravages that grief and illness and close confinement had wrought.

After a very short interval Mary was carried back to bed. She passed a peaceful night, and, anxious to relieve her companions, wrote them a few bright lines:

"I now give you the news, having had this night almost as good an one as that first. Your many holy prayers hath been the cause that extreme of extremes in my head is now no more, else my fever is strong, but it is not yet my time to die. All will

pass, and the love and charity of all, in this house, is such as one would not believe, their prayers continual, etc. Sure my soul and body gain by this bargain." From that day Mary gradually grew better.

Meanwhile the memorials sent from the Paradeiser Haus and other quarters on Mary Ward's behalf reached Rome. In one—a direct appeal to the Holy Father—Mary's companions told him of the treatment she had received, which, they said, "if not death, was a dying life," and ended with the following pleading words: "Vouchsafe, then, to call her to Rome, give her leave at least once to speak her own cause, the case being made so public, and that of which she is accused, and for which she is thus treated, so enormous."

The appeal had immediate effect. The Pope summoned a special Congregation of Cardinals to investigate the matter, condemned the proceeding against Mary's person, and declared that he had been kept in entire ignorance of the decree issued for her arrest and imprisonment. He forthwith ordered a decree for her release to be prepared and sent off to the Paradeiser Haus. It reached the Convent on the 15th April, 1631.

Who shall describe the intense gratitude and delight of all its inmates when the news was received! With hearts overflowing with joy they set off to the *Anger* Convent to bring Mary the good tidings.

Was it the suddenness of the news, or the dread of the future, or a longing for a few days' preparation before facing it, that made Mary shrink from leaving her cell? All these reasons, no doubt, and she begged her sisters to leave her yet three

days longer. The 15th was the Friday before Holy Week, and she wanted to spend Palm Sunday—"a principal feast with poor me," she said—in silence and prayer. The same answer she sent to the Elector Maximilian and Elizabeth, who, on receiving the good news, at once sent for her to Court.

Monday, therefore, in Holy Week—a day after our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem—Mary left her prison cell, and drove in the Archduke's carriage to the Paradeiser Haus, free, but with the taint of heresy clinging to her name, with her work completely shattered, her children disbanded, her Institute condemned. It required an heroic heart to bear up against such a home-coming, but Mary's heart was heroic, and not by a sign or word did she damp the joy of her children at her return.

"*Those grand crosses*," Father Gerard had written in speaking of Mary's troubles. They were grand when viewed in the light of Heaven, but, like our Saviour's cross, they galled the shoulder. The wording of the Bull of Suppression was severe in the extreme. The Institute was to be "suppressed, extinct, uprooted, and abolished," and the members absolved from their vows; the habit was to be put off and never re-assumed; and "the Virgins themselves are desired to part company, not to dwell in the Colleges or Houses, and not to meet together to consult on any spiritual or temporal matter." Thus, at the command of the Supreme Pontiff, the ten flourishing houses of the Institute—one at St. Omer, two at Liège, and one at Cologne, Trèves, Rome, Naples, Munich, Presburg, and in England—

were dissolved and the two or three hundred women disbanded, sent adrift on the world. Mary, writing to the Holy Father about this time, enumerates the sufferings she has endured. They make a catalogue not unworthy of being placed side by side of St. Paul's: she had been, she said, "publicly declared a heretic, a schismatic, an obstinate rebel against Holy Church, and taken and imprisoned as such; her company was ridiculed by the heretics for having left their country and parents, despised by Catholics, held as disgraced by their nearest relations; their annual revenues were unjustly taken from them, so that in four of the Colleges they were obliged to beg their bread."

The greater number of Mary's religious returned to their homes; many entered other convents; and a noble few, with the Holy Father's sanction, remained faithful and true to their first vows, true to Mary in suffering and disgrace. She was a Mother worthy to be loved. Those who lived in daily contact with her say:

"Nor was there seen the least diminution or alteration in this peace when by the Bull she beheld, not only a period put to all her efforts for what was dearer to her than life, but the ruin of her labours past, the loss of so many houses which with great toil she had established, and so many souls running the risk of perdition by taking this occasion to turn their backs on God Almighty. What but this conformity to the Divine will could have made her without the slightest disturbance, sadness or least unquiet, see and rise above the total destruction of the work of nearly thirty years, both spiritual and temporal, except in a very small number of souls prevented and kept by her great

charity and special care? To all which she would say, with a serene countenance, 'If it be not my fault, all these houses will always be houses to me, and the desire I have had to advance others in perfection will not be vain or useless to me.'"

CHAPTER XV.

"The future brightens on our sight;
For on the past hath fallen a light."
—WORDSWORTH.

WHEN ruin fell on Mary Ward's work, one roof alone, as we have seen, remained to cover her destitute children. To the Paradeiser Haus, therefore, refugees from Vienna and other disbanded houses came for protection and shelter. Such a home was an unspeakable boon to Mary at this time. It enabled her to keep the young members of the old Institute from the dangers and hardships of the world, and to retain a foothold in Bavaria for the Institute if it should please God to raise it up again.

But the times were evil. Nearer and nearer the Swedish army approached Bavaria. Tilly, its valiant defender, had fallen in battle as became a hero, and Gustavus Adolphus was marching on towards Munich. People began to feel the horrors of war: commerce was stopped; provisions were dear and scanty; rich and poor suffered alike. At the Paradeiser Haus there was almost absolute want. The food was of the coarsest kind, and little enough of that. One day the cook came to Mary with a handful of pease—all there was for the dinner of the household. "Prepare them," Mary said, cheerfully. She did prepare them, and, serving them round in ample portions to each hungry Sister, had over as many as she had cooked.

But the day came when there was not even a

handful of pease for dinner, and the "English Ladies" turned out to beg in the streets. Then it was that Anna Rörlin, "my Jungfrau," showed her sterling qualities. As a native of the land she would fare better, she knew, than her foreign sisters; so she persuaded them to allow her to go alone on foraging expeditions in the country round. Bold and daring in a good cause, she once ventured to pass through the enemies' camp to get help from some friends at Landshut, and, like Judith, "her angel was her keeper both going hence and returning."

In the midst of this distress, Mary Ward was obliged to leave her little flock and go to Rome. She had favours to ask of the Holy Father; misunderstandings to put right; her future conduct to regulate according to his good pleasure. And, above all, she had to free herself from the charge of heresy. Besides, she had as yet no formal leave to keep her few remaining children with her, and in doing so was justified only by charity and necessity. Without a word of supplication she could not send them adrift. Without resources she could not pay their passage money to England. But longer than necessary she dared not act without the Pope's permission.

The parting on both sides was hard, and very tender were Mary's farewell words. She commended all her children to Mary Poyntz, whom she appointed Mother—Superior they might not call her—in her place. "Specially this one," she said, turning to Frances Constable, a healthy young novice of sixteen, "for she will soon be in Heaven." Strong and well as Frances then was, the prophecy was fulfilled before the summer was over. The

beautiful soul had done its work, and God took it to Himself.

It was the month of August, 1632, when Mary Ward, with Elizabeth Cotton and Anne Turner, left Munich for the last time. Almost penniless, with great hopes and fears, she had entered it five years before. As penniless, and with as great hopes and fears, she left it that April. She was going to the feet of the Father who had struck her, to ask him to heal the wound. And her trust was not misplaced.

Kneeling before Urban VIII. in her first audience, Mary said: "Holy Father, I neither am, nor ever have been, a heretic." "We believe it, We believe it," he said, with paternal kindness; "We need no other proof; We and the Cardinals are well informed as to yourself and your habits, and your exemplary conduct; We and they all are not only satisfied, but edified, and We know that you have carried on your Institute well. We have nevertheless permitted the trial of your virtues, nor must you think it much to have been proved as you have been, as other Popes, Our predecessors, have done in similar cases, who have exercised the endurance of the servants of God."*

These words evidence, not only the paternal feeling, but the reverence with which Urban ever regarded Mary, although the circumstances of those sad times prevented him from acceding to her request as regards her Institute. They explain, too,

* "The history of this and other audiences with Urban is from V. Pageti's 'Breve Raconto,' Fathers Lohner and Bissel, and W. Wigmore." (Note, p. 405, Vol. II., "Life of Mary Ward.")

his subsequent benignity towards her personally, the protection he afforded her, and the tacit permission he granted to resume her work.

Emboldened by his kindness, Mary made her petitions. Winefrid Wigmore, her most devoted companion, was still a prisoner at Liège. Urban, who knew nothing of the imprisonment, promised her immediate release. Then Mary pleaded for the house at Munich. Need she send from her those delicate young girls who had left rich homes in England, where they had lived, loving and loved, and who had braved dangers of land and sea to follow their vocation? Might they not still live together? "Let them come to Rome," Urban said. "We are glad that they should come, and We will take them under our protection."

All her petitions were granted, and Mary left the Holy Father with a light heart.

Not long after this audience, through her persevering exertions with Urban, a letter was sent from the secretary of the Holy Office to the Nuncio at Cologne, fully vindicating the good name of the members of the suppressed Institute. It runs as follows:

"There are in this city at the present time, the Lady Donna Maria della Guardia with some other of her English companions, who with acts of humility, and of fitting reverence towards the Holy See, have most readily obeyed what our Holy Lord commanded concerning the suppression of their Institute, to the entire satisfaction of their Eminences, my lords. To whom it has appeared good that I should make your Holiness acquainted with

this result, to the end that if from evil-disposed or badly-informed persons you should hear the contrary, you may attest to them this truth. Also that if your Holiness should be questioned, you may affirm that in this holy tribunal, the English Ladies who have lived under the Institute of Donna Maria della Guardia, are not found, nor ever have been found, guilty of any failure which regards the holy and orthodox Catholic faith. Moreover, having heard here that in the district of your Nunciature various properties which belong to them have been taken possession of, this Holy Congregation desires that you should efficaciously employ your good offices with those princes or other persons, whom to you may appear necessary, in order that they may co-operate to the restitution of all which, with injustice towards the same ladies, has been occupied by others, that each one of them may maintain herself by her own means and supply her own necessities. And recommending them thus most warmly to the pious and charitable zeal of your Holiness," etc.*

Mary must have longed to have her companions—or, at least, some of them—under the protection of the Holy Father, yet it was not until the spring of 1633 that they arrived in Rome. Poverty and the plague account for this delay. The poverty of the little family at Munich was, as we have seen, almost destitution. At the dispersing of the schools Maximilian had withdrawn his grants, and the alms collected barely sufficed to procure food. The Roman house was faring scarcely better. From the sup-

* The copy of this letter is in the Nymphenburg archives. ("Life of Mary Ward.")

pression to the end of her life one of Mary's greatest trials was poverty in its grimmest form. But it was a poverty that drew the hearts of all closer together. They all suffered, but each one grieved only for the suffering of the other. When the house in Munich got a little money—"losings," they called it—it was instantly sent off to help the strugglers in Rome. And when the Roman band had a few coins to spare, they sent them off to the sufferers in Germany

Worse than poverty was the *plague*, which had followed in the wake of the war, and to which several fell victims in the Paradeiser Haus. Allusions to this awful visitation are frequently made in the few remaining letters of this time. Few they may well be, for Mary burnt all she received as soon as read, lest they should fall into the hands of enemies. One ecclesiastic, she was told, had laid plans for capturing her correspondence. She made a counter-plot with the holy angels, and gave into their charge all that was consigned to the post. In the letters that remain *aliases* are frequently used as another precaution. Thus *Felice* or *Margery* was Mary Ward; *the miller and his mate*, the Elector and Electress; *Anthony*, the Pope; *Peter*, Barbara Babthorpe; *Ned*, Mary Poyntz; *Jerusalems*, their opposers; *largesses* or *losings*, money.*

The following letter to Mary Poyntz, brief as it is, shows Mary Ward's indomitable will and perseverance. The Holy Father had given her

* In quoting Mary Ward's letters, where the sense would otherwise be obscure to the ordinary reader, a change has been made from the *alias* to the real name.

leave to live in Rome, but this was not enough for her purpose. She hoped for wider permission still:

"Fain, fain would Felice have Ned's house [the Paradeiser Haus] still possessed. Felice will out of hand seek if by public order [the Pope's leave] all may live together where they please, and that great one [Maximilian] may do piously and well to help them, and then the world is theirs. But this must be done ere said, lest prevented, and no time shall be lost, which if happily obtained, Felice thinks old courtesies ought not to be denied but confirmed."

Another note shows her sorrowing over Mary Poyntz—"her son Ned"—who is suffering in the midst of contagion and misery. Ill as she herself is, she plans to come to Munich as soon as she has money enough to establish her Roman house, and for the expenses of the journey.

[Felice] "means for aught I yet see to go to Ned, not call him to her. She is *resolutissimo* he shall work with her, from which determination none can move her. I ask her reason, she saith she hath many, besides, knows she loves him, and he her, and besides all other, will not have his health lost and days consumed. And so much for her resolution in this, which only her own death can alter."

Again:

"Felice is afraid that Ned should get the disease, which I should think doth her health no good, especially when she hears not from him, but I angrily bid her be assured God will defend him for better good."

Another scrap is dated Feb., 1633:

"Margery is very weak and ill, but she will not die; it is not the time, saith she. The service of God is dear to her, and His nature is so truly good, as to serve who He sees busied in His service, and He is passing powerful, and will do Felice a good turn, in due time (do not think He will not), I do swear it, if the fault be not hers."

At length Margaret Genison, with the Munich party, arrived in Rome, and no small stir their coming made. The "Jerusalems" went immediately to apprise the Pope, who quietly told them that it was by his invitation they had come. "But," said the objectors, "if her companions live with Mary Ward as before, would not the Bull be nullified?" "Where should they live, or where can they live so well?" was his answer. Donna Constanza Barberini, his sister-in-law, and her family were charged to take the new-comers under their protection, to put the family carriage at their disposal, and to present them three at a time to kiss his feet. Most fatherly and kind was his reception of them. They were welcome to Rome, he said; he was glad they had come; he knew every one would be edified by their behaviour.

With the Holy Father's smile, sunshine seems to have once more entered into Mary's life. Yet there remained still much to trouble her Mother's heart. She was still separated from an heroic band of her children, who bravely remained in Bavaria to keep possession of the house, which, if once abandoned, might pass entirely out of their hands. She was ill: "The physician now daily saith her life is miraculous," writes Elizabeth

Cotton; "indeed, her sleep or meat are neither anything to be counted of, and yet she lives, and will live," full of anxious care for the many she had to feed and shelter and provide for. The house was too small to accommodate the newly arrived members, and yet she had not the wherewithal to procure a better. "O money, money!" she cried. "Good Jesus, what will be done for largesses? the only want of which, if God work not some miracle, will be the loss of all. Jesus, for His goodness' sake, do what His poor servants cannot, for His own honour."

But the money question was not important enough in Mary's eyes to crush her generous designs. She tells Mary Poyntz again that she is going to ask the Pope for a Brief to open a school.

"Felice is labouring with might and main to have this if such a grace she can with all her forces procure; delays may be dangerous, and she prohibited through those who desire to hinder her trade and traffic."

In course of time it became evident that for prudential reasons Mary should not leave Rome, and Mary Poyntz was ordered to come to her there:

"This is St. Ignatius' Eve, and I am either very idle or extraordinary ill. The heats are great, and I had said little or nothing this day, but old Margery [herself] hath begged that I would let her son Ned know that she hath writ unto him of her resolution to begin to set up her loom [schools] at Michaelmas, that she expects to meet him about that time at my Lady Mary's chief house [Loreto], that he therefore go so soon as he

can take leave of the miller and his mate, and have from them what can possibly be had, by such speech and in such manner as to Ned his prudence may seem best."

A little later she writes :

"Felice dies to hear that Ned hath been with the miller and how all there passed, Jesus of His goodness protect His. The miller's mate I love from my heart, she shall be served to her content, but let her give vacance" (leave to depart).

This her generous benefactress apparently did, and provided also money for the journey, for Mary in a later note rejoices that the Electress was found to be "*in good terms.*"

Winefrid Bedingfield was appointed to take Mary Poyntz' place in Munich. To her Mary wrote the following :

"My dear Winn,

"Now I have more than ever cause to see and experience your love and loyalty to God, your companion [Mary Poyntz], and me. Do therefore all in her absence so as she and yourself did and is best to be. Answer these by the first, I shall be there to receive them. Three posts before these, extremes in one kind or other, toothache, etc., hindered me from writing to you about her departure and that you should supply the whole. My heart you know, and my manner of doing all, you are not ignorant of. . . . Let me hear often from you. Your manner and terms of and in writing is very good, and such as none but should can understand. *Vale.* Make account that what Margery can say to yours there, will be more than that is said. Your sister Frances is well and doth as well

as I could wish. What saith our dear Jungfrau? all, all happiness to her.

"7ber. 17, 1633."

Further little notes as to route, etc., exist. Evidently Mary hoped to meet her friend at Loreto; "the Blue Lady, her chief house . . . there, there is the appointed place of meeting," she says, "and who first arrives must expect the other. She desires his prayers for supply of her many wants, she will not cease to labour and something in fine will be. God is rich enough for us all."

When the travellers had given notice of their near approach Mary wrote with childlike joy:

"A thousand, thousand welcomes so near us. Not one word heard I of your setting forth from your own town till this morning I had yours from Ferrara, and yet God knows what search I have made. Alas! my Mary I cannot set forth this twenty days, the reason you will know when I have you. Have you? Alas! I have and shall for ever have you! but here I mean. Well, there is a speech of a house to be given Margery and hers, and I will see that business so well advanced as that it could not go back, if not in possession. Make, I pray, a most profound and humble reverence to my Lady Mother and Mistress for poor me, then come to me with what speed you can possible, I mean commodiously, for I think the time long till I have you here to penance for all the faults you crave pardon for! Keep your coming to Rome as much as possible from the knowledge or suspect of the Jerusalems, for that they know is the only and worst of bads can happen, because your being here must be private,

and if known, so wholly hindered, or else *her* departure will be public. But if there is no remedy but that the said Jerusalems must know of your coming, let not that hinder you nor anything else, we will overcome all and have what we will, or to say better, will nothing but what we have or can have. A thousand, thousand farewells. Ever yours.

"Rome, 8ber. 5, 1633."

"The Jerusalems" again. Perhaps it will be well to mention that party once more. They had by no means laid aside their animosity to Mary Ward, and, though prevented by the Pope from doing any actual harm either to Mary in person or to her work, they pursued her with petty suspicions, spyings, and mischievous misconstructions to the end of her life. In the archives of the Diocese of Westminster there is a letter, written from England by one who signed himself W. E., to Dr. Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, which shows better than any amount of other evidence the attitude taken up by some of the secular clergy towards Mary Ward:

"Mrs. Ward is sayd here to bee gone up to R. with a certaynty of having her order confirmed—*revelationibus animata divinitus:* but as I heere, *los Padres* advise her to lay downe her imaginary pretended mission, and to apply her ayme only to a confirmation of her Institute to bring up feminine youth, soe by that means, betweene them, both sexes shall have a general dependence of them. This project will prove as dangerous to the Church, and particularly all orders of that sex, as their other project was ridiculous. I would Mr. Fitton [clergy agent] knew this; for here they

give it out with great confidence that her order is presently to be confirmed, and that some great one *multa passus est in somnis pro illa.* . . .

"Your lordship's ever most dutiful child,

"W. E.

"April 9."

If proof beyond that of her life were needed to show on which side singleness of purpose and true zeal lay, it would be found in the spirit of charity which breathes in every line of Mary's most private correspondence, contrasted with the bitter, satirical tone of her opponents.

To tell Winefrid Bedingfield of the safe arrival of Mary Poyntz, Mary writes:

"My dear Winn,

"Thou shalt not always be put off with a postscript. Poor Ned is very ill of her old disease. I hope it will pass, meanwhile it is a sad thing to see one so worthy of love so pained, and were she now on her journey she must lie by; but so good is God. I cannot say how much joy and true content it is to me to see by yours in what degree [a name destroyed] is with you, and by his discourse what he holds of his dear and so deserving companion. How happy a thing it is to love God and serve and seek Him *da vero.* I ever loved much more than ordinary, but I shall fear to love you too much, if your proceedings be still such as I verily think they will."

"I ever loved much more than ordinary." This was true; and it was this love that made her feel acutely the death or departure of any of her

children. About this time, (1634) she lost many dear ones by death. Jane Brown, one of her first companions, died before Mary left Munich. No expense nor trouble had been spared to save her life. In hopes that change of air would do her good, Mary had the invalid conveyed in a litter, with a man-servant and lay-sister in attendance, from Naples to Munich. There two rooms were set apart for her use, and a special nurse hired to look after her. "Was there not superfluity in these arrangements?" some one asked. "What!" Mary answered, "would you that we should spare any expense for one who formerly never spared herself in the service of Jesus Christ?" Jane died of a broken heart the year the fatal Bull was published. Cicely Morgan, once Mistress of Novices, was the next to follow—her end was sudden. "Poor Cicely," Mary writes in 1633; "for God's love put a cross on her grave, and when God makes us able, bury her more like what God made her, at least well born. Her death so, without failing, hath done me harm." Then Ellen Marshall, one of the nine English novices who in 1630 joined the Institute, was taken Home. With motherly solicitude Mary writes: "What would I give to know how all do, and how all passeth with and about you. I will thank our Lord much for the confidence and other graces He gives you. I much fear E. M. is by this time dead, to-morrow I will procure a Mass for the Dead at adventure, to-day I would but could not."

In 1634 the plague still ravaged Bavaria. To comfort and strengthen Winefrid Bedingfield, Mary writes:

"I had made myself sure of these two hours, but since this cannot be, be most assured that the less I am now able to say to you, the more I do and will pray for you. Be confident in God, more than ever grateful to His unseen goodness. Be most careful of your health, and though all should die (as I trust in the mercy of God none will), yet seek you to live and prepare yourself to begin to serve Him with abundant love and in greatest perfection. Make your general confession when yourself thinks good and finds a confessor to your liking, but so as health be not hurt. My remembrances to Barbara and all. I could wish Ursula had a mind of herself to stay still with you, but force her not, neither woo her. *Vale.*—All yours, M. W.

"9. 9ber."

In that year the brave and faithful Catherine Köchin died, stricken by the plague, in a hospital where, for fear of giving contagion, she had begged her sisters to send her. Mary writes, not knowing of her death:

"For Jesus' sake, prefer the safety of yourself and yours before all things that obligeth not in conscience. Would to Christ my poor prayers could secure you and free me from solicitude in that particular, though I truly confide God will not let one more of you suffer. Let your confessions and hearing of sermons be with moral security, at least never with imminent danger. Good Winn, be careful and merry. A most happy new year to you and yours, give the same from me to my dearly beloved Jungfrau, to whose holy prayers I instantly commend my poor self and

many necessities. Be mindful of me in your grotto. I have a great suit to our Blessed Lady, which I will hereafter tell you. I hope you have heard what passed betwixt Margery and Anthony. See you love God, and help me in all, not all you can, you can all. *Vale*, a thousand good nights."

"My dear Winn,

"I could hope thou art not sick, but to want any post now goes very hard. Be most careful to avoid danger. Jesus bless and keep you and all with you. By the next, if I can, the Elector shall have something in Italian to the purpose you wish. I only defer for better advantage. St. Joseph is my patron for this year. Help me to be much in his favour."

When, later, schools were again opened in Munich, Mary wrote a few bright words to Winefrid:

"Jesus bless my dear Win, and her bees [schools] also. But in best earnest set all other things and cares aside to tend to, or rather than hurt, your health. Think you to be long so solitary or have no more to do than now you do? We shall meet, my Winn, I die not at this time. Say most truly how your health is by your next, and more—to witt, all that is. *Vale.*"

"I send now no more *losings*, till you say, and then be sure of them; but what account shall I have when we meet of my swarm of bees?" (schools). This was written when a season of comparative opulence had come round to the flock in Munich.

In 1636—to look forward a little—she wrote a note eminently characteristic:

"My dear Winn,

"Jesus forbid you should make such children as you teach pay one penny for windows, wood, or anything else. For God's love, if you do that work of charity, do it like yourself, not mercenarily, else, my dear Winn, follow my poor counsel and let it alone. *Vale.*"

A little later still, when Winefrid Bedingfield was taken ill from overwork, she received the following pretty letter. Mary was at Nettuno, on the coast not far from Rome, and very suffering.

"Dear Winn,

"Yesternight came to visit us a poor man, but a great servant of Almighty God. I most earnestly commended to his prayers an absent friend of mine, whom I greatly feared would incur inconceivable loss by overwearing herself. He promised he would, but withal said that my being humble would be that party's cure, which Jesus grant, and let this His lesson serve us both.—Yours,

"MARY WARD.

"Feb. 7, 1637."

Perhaps we may look forward into future years and mention two other deaths that caused Mary sorrow. Early in the year 1635 the generous benefactor the Electress Elizabeth breathed her last, and left the Institute bereft of a friend whose like it would never see again. Elizabeth's life had been a suffering one, and her last days were

shrouded by a deep melancholy.* Two years later Father Gerard, Mary's oldest and best friend, died at the English College in Rome. No mention is made of this loss in her letters, but we can well imagine what a void in her heart and in her counsels that true religious would leave. He was seventy-two years of age, and was writing a book on "Friendship" when the summons came—a fit subject for one who was an ideal friend.

Sadder than the death of her holy ones was the loss of a vocation. Elizabeth, her own sister, had left the Institute many years before, and Margaret Genison, Father Gerard's niece, had returned home. Some others, however, who gave her passing trouble, were won by her gentle kindness to persevere in God's service. Her influence over hearts was extraordinary. Over the novices she exerted her special power. One of them, who was struggling hard with temptation, met her in a passage, and Mary, seeing that all was not well with her, said gently: "Dear child, virtue is only hard to those who think it to be so. Your way to Heaven must be to receive everything from the hand of God, and to seek Him in all." No more was needed. The battle in the young soul was fought and won.

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* MS. compiled from best German historians.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness."—*Wisdom* vii. 16.

IN a short time Mary Ward's house on the Esquiline became the resort of all Rome. Visitors of every class, visitors at every hour, visitors on every sort of business and of no business at all, came flocking to her for comfort, advice, help, or amusement, or simply to enjoy her presence. And no wonder. For to diffuse happiness as God diffuses His sunshine seemed Mary's end in life. Her face was bright, her conversation was bright, her letters were bright. And this because she knew that sad service is never long service; that to bear much and do much for God there must be joy in the heart and, if possible, a smile on the lips. She studied each soul as a botanist studies a plant, and adapted herself to its wants and moods and likings to gain it to God. Her love of her neighbour had the true ring about it. As humility is said to be the love of God to the contempt of self, charity may be called the love of one's neighbour to the forgetfulness of self. It was this forgetfulness of self which made Mary so heart-winning. Pain never made her peevish, nor calumny morose. Poverty, which hardens many hearts, opened hers yet more, and gave a wide sympathy with all in want.

Thus the concourse of people to the Esquiline was great—so great that Mary's enemies pretended to be, or perhaps really were, alarmed, and told

the Pope of their fears. But his answer was ready. "He was very glad to hear it, he said, for assuredly they were either good, or will become so, since they frequent that house."

Once, however, these "Jerusalems" gained the Holy Father's ear. Mary had been so ill that in the spring of 1635 change of air was deemed absolutely necessary to save her life. "My dear Mother's health is very poor," writes Mary Poyntz at the back of a letter going to Munich; "she is even lame, besides all other pains. . . .

"Our Mother's health is extreme bad, no means to have it better or less, and now care is renewed lest you receive damage in dear times. For God's sake pray hard that God do not according to our sins. Cough, fever, and stone, and these pains incessantly, without any means to remedy. . . . God is powerful."

At last the baths of San Cassiano, which had helped her once before, were ordered for her, and Mary at once prepared to take the journey. This step, however, put her enemies into an awkward predicament. They had spread reports abroad and in England that Mary was only a prisoner at large in Rome, and that she could not leave the Holy City under any pretext whatever. And here she was, setting out on a long journey without a word of remonstrance from Pope or Cardinals.

Urban, misled by their representations, sent an eminent ecclesiastic—Mgr. Boccabella—to tell Mary from him that for reasons of State he begged she would not leave Rome.

"Am I a prisoner, then?" Mary asked, astonished.

"By no means," he answered; "you are free, entirely free, nor is there anything in which you

are held in suspicion, and I myself am a witness of the paternal tenderness and affection which his Holiness has for you, but there are considerations for which he wishes that you should not go out of Rome."

"This is a difficult matter," Mary replied. "My life, and my good name, which I value more than life, are here both concerned. I know how far duty obliges me in such a case, yet tell His Holiness from me that I am most ready to obey him, and that I lay them both at his feet, not only willingly, but with devotion, and that I would willingly sacrifice a thousand lives if I had them in order to obey his wishes."

Mgr. Boccabella conveyed Mary's answer to Urban, who instantly withdrew his opposition. "She should go whither she would and as she would," all considerations of State to the contrary notwithstanding, he said.

It is hard to account for the persistent mistrust with which Mary Ward inspired her opponents, unless it be that persecution, like sickness, renders the sufferer over-sensitive, ready to see danger where no danger is, and in evident good a possible evil. Mary's extraordinary influence over contemporaries, according to her "good friends," was used to further the designs of the Jesuits—whatever that may mean—and discredit the seculars in the Court of Rome. Every point of evidence that still exists tends to disprove any such aim on Mary's part. To work once more for God's glory was her only ambition; to see the cloud lifted from her Institute, the only reward. But her enemies set spies all along her path to San Cassiano, one in every town through which she passed, lest she

should take the opportunity to go to England, where of all places in the world they least wanted her. But Mary's simple good faith and trust in God helped her through every difficulty better than any amount of astuteness or cunning would have done, and made for her friends of the beggars on the road-side, great ladies in their chateaux, and Inquisitors set to watch her movements, even the very spies themselves. Pointing out as a spy a man who was drinking at a fountain near her, Mary added: "Do not fear, God will help us, we will so pray to his good angel, that he shall not have the power to say aught in prejudice of God's honour, or our innocency." Before two days were passed the spy was dead.

Something very like a miracle occurred at this time. With her on a pilgrimage to our Blessed Lady of Monte Giovino, a celebrated shrine in the neighbourhood, was an old man-servant of hers, who injured his head severely. Mary bound up the wound, prayed earnestly for his recovery, and had holy Mass offered up for him. The following day, when the doctor called, he found him, to his astonishment, completely cured.

When Mary returned to Rome she told Urban how grieved she was to find herself still mistrusted, even by members of the Holy Office. "Holy Father," she said, "what more can poor Mary Ward do to prove her fidelity and loyalty towards your Holiness and towards the Catholic Church, but must her life, her good name and her liberty also be left in the hands of men, but too easily suborned and corrupted?"

Scarcely waiting till she finished her sentence, Urban answered: "Be satisfied, my daughter, it

shall be so no more, none shall be able to wrong you with us henceforth in the least. It is true that in the process of information given We found both malice and folly." From that day to the day of her death Mary was never more troubled with Inquisitors or spies. The Pope increased the pension he allowed her, put one of his own carriages at her disposal, sent from his own buttery the kind of wine he himself drank, saying it would suit her, had her attended by his own physician and supplied with medicine from his own dispensary. What could a father do more for his child?

In 1636 Mary wrote down a few notes of meditation. They are dated "St. Gregory's day"—always a great feast with her—and are a comparison between this celebration of the feast and that other in the Poor Clare Convent of St. Omer twenty-nine years before.

"I. H. S.

"O how well ordered are *Thy* deeds, my Lord God! Then Thou saidst that justice was the best disposition, *now Thou* showest how such justice is to be gotten.

"Then Thou saidst what I should do to satisfy for my sins, now Thou showest where such satisfaction *is to be done.*

"Then Thou showed I should be saved, now the same with some *addition.*"

Mary had asked God to let her satisfy Him for her sins in this world, and she believed her prayer was answered. And we may believe so too, for in the last nine years of her life the agonies she suffered seemed intolerable. She rose from one

attack of illness only to be seized by another, and each seizure seemed worse than its predecessor. Yet,

"Pain,
Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands of mightiest,"*

could not subdue her brave spirit. Her mind, even during a crisis where her life was at stake, was working out the problem of how to get to England. For two months she kept her bed, and there in the midst of tortures, matured her plans.

When the summer of 1637 came, she was given over by the doctor. The Last Sacraments must be administered, they said, and she must prepare for death. Not hard to Mary was preparation for death, though she felt it was not yet to come. She received all the last rites. The Pope's last blessing was brought by Cardinal St. Onofrio himself, who, condoling with her children, said, "we were to bless God for having left her us so many years, until she, by her word and example, had made others capable of governing us in her absence." This same Cardinal it was who, six years before, had signed the Brief denouncing Mary as a heretic and schismatic.

One night in August, after hours of pain, Mary told Winefrid Wigmore, who was watching by her, that she would go to Spa, adding: "I do not know myself what God will do by it, but, humanly speaking, here I must die, there I may recover."

"But how for the wherewithal?" said Winefrid.

"God will provide," was Mary's answer.

With Mary Ward in most things to will was to do, and such proved to be the case here. Her two

* Milton.

companions, Mary Poyntz and Winefrid Wigmore, were sent to Urban to bid him farewell and ask his blessing on her journey.

"It is true," said Urban, "that, humanly speaking, the journey must needs kill her, without hope of escape, but she is a great servant of God, He will guide her to do what is best, and We know not what He would do by her. We will give orders to all our Nuncios, where she will pass, to receive her, where she may stay and rest herself by the way, when and as long as she will. For We do esteem her, not only as a woman of great prudence and of extraordinary courage and powers of mind, but what is much more, We consider her as a holy and great servant of God. You who go with her obey and serve her, for as long as you do this you will do well."

If we look at the map of Europe and run our eye up the peninsula of Italy, across France into the Low Countries, and find Spa, in the province of Liège, we shall have some idea of the journey Mary intended to take. If, in addition to this, we consider the dangerous state of the country through which she passed, the difficulties of travelling in those days of bad roads and worse vehicles, and of wretched wayside inns, we may say, with her cousin Father Conyers, S.J., that of all the graces she received she might count the safety of that journey the chiefest.

What the charity of her friends could devise to make her travelling bearable was done with such good will that Winefrid Wigmore notices how like the pre-arranged journey of a princess it was. Urban's letters of recommendation to his Nuncios

were so full of injunctions that one of them—Mgr. Caffarelli—told her that, much to his regret, there was nothing left in his reception of her for his free will to do.

It would take too long to follow Mary in every step of the way, and relate all the incidents that happened on the road, but for a few we must find space. At Bologna, the noble Cesare Bianchetti, received her with great marks of respect, served her himself, saw to her fire, set her a chair, looked after the comfort of her servants. At Vercelli, an English prisoner was given his liberty in her honour. At Turin, the Duchess of Savoy invited her to Court, and sent to her lodgings twelve pages laden with sweatmeats, wine, and fowls. In a snow-blinding passage across Mont Cenis, a little dog preserved her from the destruction which fell upon four of the company.

The winter of 1637 she passed in Paris, where "God provided unexpected supplies" of money and help. In the month of May she resumed her journey to Spa, travelling up the Meuse from Charleville to Dinant in a ship she had hired for her own little party. Going on board, she found, to her horror, that it was filled with coarse soldiers, who with scornful words and jests saluted her and her companions. Without leave or license they had taken possession of the boat, and had intended to use it for their own purposes. But Mary's calm dignity and graciousness of manner disarmed them, and they respectfully begged to be allowed to accompany her. Some of the most dissolute, however, felt so uncomfortable in her presence that they longed for their landing. To three poor people Mary gave a free passage; one of them,

seeing the power she possessed even over wild natures, and knowing that there was still much danger to go through, begged to make one of her party, and confided to her all the money she had about her.

At Liège thoughts of other times came back to Mary and her companions. Seventeen years before she had left that city with two houses "well furnished, and settled with all needful for ours to serve God in," writes Winefrid, "conform to our vocation, and now found neither house, nor so much as a bed for herself and companions to lie in, besides many circumstances capable to move a heart of stone. Yet was there not seen in her a sigh or sad looking back, no, nor an unpeaceful look or word, or least condemnation of the actors. It sufficed her all was signed by the will or Providence of God, and therefore no further to be questioned."

Within its walls, too, had lived that one of all others who had wronged her most—Mary Allcock, to whose accusations the grave charges made in Urban's Bull of Suppression can be traced. Still, Mary's motherly heart could feel no rancour. "Faults and ingratitudes," Winefrid continues, "could never break the bond between them on her side, and what her exercise in this particular was, God only and herself could tell. At the height of all she said, and with much sweetness, 'Who but I should suffer, and excuse their faults?'"

From Liège the travellers went to Spa, where Mary might have derived some benefit had not a lady of noble birth attached herself to her with such persistency that there was time neither for rest nor cure. Mary, with her usual charity, devoted herself entirely to the poor sufferer; for

sufferer she certainly was. A cancer was slowly bringing her to the grave, and yet she could not be induced to make her peace with God. Here was an opportunity for Mary's zeal, and everything else was put aside for its exercise. When her companions complained that the object of their toilsome journey was being defeated, she answered, "So I do what my Master sent me for, what imports it whether I recover?" And as once that Master's journey up the Phœnician coast ended with the salvation of a soul, so Mary's charity won back to God this poor woman, whom she never left until, anointed with the Holy Oils, she closed her eyes in death.

"Business not to be put off," as Winifred puts it, took Mary to Bonn, where her old friend and benefactor, Ferdinand, Prince Bishop of Liège, was residing. This important business seems to have been the re-establishment at some future time of the houses of the Institute. Ferdinand—"that blessed Bishop," as Mary calls him—entered into all her plans, and things looked very promising for a time. But opposition of some kind was aroused, we know not how, and in Mary's lifetime no steps to found anew could be taken.

For many years Mary had had a resistless longing to revisit England—the land of her birth, of her sorrows, of her hopes. She wanted to undo the wrong evil tongues had done to her good name and to her work; to reassemble, as at Rome, her scattered children and reorganise their schemes for saving souls. And now the time for realising this hope had come. With letters of introduction from the Holy Father to Queen Henrietta Maria,

she sailed in May, 1639, from St. Omer to Calais, and thence to Dover. The two last pictures in the *Painted Life* show us our Lord comforting her with the knowledge of future happiness. In the forty-ninth He is represented introducing to her an unknown bishop, of stately presence and benign of countenance, whom He tells her will one day befriend her struggling Institute.* In the fiftieth picture our Lord is standing by her, His right hand on her arm; with the left He points to a vision of glory in the heavens and bids her be comforted, for her death is not far off and great glory awaits her in her heavenly Home.

Yet Mary's last hours in exile were spent in tears. "She wrote many letters," says her biographer, "and wept much." Why did she weep? Was it the thought of the land she was leaving, or the land she was nearing? We do not know; but more than common sorrow it must have been to draw tears from Mary's eyes.

* Thought to be John Christopher, Bishop of Augsburg, 1680.

CHAPTER XVII.

"My delicate ones have walked rough ways."—*Baruch* iv. 23.

IN London Mary Ward's dwelling-place can only be conjectured. Probably it was in St. Martin's Lane—at one time certainly the home of her companion—then a country suburb; or possibly it was in the neighbourhood of the French Ambassador's, or of Somerset House. Wherever it was, there her scattered children gathered again and put themselves with joy under her leadership. One of these was Frances Bedingfield, whom Mary had sent to England after taking her vows in St. Mary Major's, Rome.* Another, Isabella Layton by name, the daughter of a rich London merchant, was a young convert, who had given up home, wealth, and relations for her faith. At her own request she had been received as a lay-sister, and had willingly become the drudge of the house, carrying wood through the streets and performing all the most menial offices.

As soon as Mary had sufficiently recovered from her journey from Rome, she presented herself to Queen Henrietta Maria. Of what passed in this audience we know only that the Queen was gracious and very kind. She was then a happy wife and mother, and though dark clouds were

* This basilica was appointed by the Pope himself for the profession of the Sisters of Mary's Institute.

looming overhead, they had not broken over the kingdom. There must have been a bond of sympathy between the Queen and her visitor, for Mary, we know, had much at heart the conversion of Charles I., and had prayed long and earnestly for it in the church at Feldkirch. That he had at one time a leaning towards the true faith can scarcely be doubted; "God forgive the authors of this disunion!" he is reported to have exclaimed. The prophecy of a Spanish recluse in 1639 was much talked of in England and abroad. If Charles, she said, did not return to the Catholic Church, he would lose his throne*—words which tally with the light Mary had received that Christmas night at Feldkirch.

To all outward appearances Mary Ward's London house was an ordinary dwelling, and Mary and its inmates were people of the world like their neighbours. They observed the strictest poverty in food and clothing. Nothing was too poor for her to eat or to wear. But about neatness she was very particular. "Poverty was to be entertained, not like a beggar, but like a queen," she used to say. And Mary Poyntz adds: "God did so bless [it] in her person, that although what she wore was of mean price and worn so long, as it was not possible to hang longer on one's back, yet had such a grace on her, that others have wondered what rarity and curiosity she had in her dressings, some saying she went [dressed] above her degree, till viewing and examining found all old and poor and mean and well patched."

No long time elapsed before people of all shades of politics and religious opinion found their

* "Life of Cardinal Wiseman," by Wilfrid Ward, Vol. I.

way to Mary's home. Some came moved by curiosity to see one who was so much talked of; others came in want of advice, of comfort, or encouragement. None went away disappointed. Amongst the most distinguished guests was the much-loved Count Rosetti, Papal Nuncio to the Queen. In his frequent talks with Mary and her companions he told them how he had been enjoined by the Holy Father and Cardinal Barberini and Donna Constanza to do all in his power to assist them. His visits were so constant and so open that at last the house became a mark for the pursuivants. Nevertheless, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved and the altar adorned with the best that could be procured in those troublous times. Priests in disguise frequently stayed in the house, and the Catholics round about attended the Sacraments and assisted at Mass.

Mary had not been long in England when some rich friends begged her to take charge of their daughters and bring them up loyal Catholics. Besides these children, she added a number of poor little ones. "So that notwithstanding the danger of the time," says Mary Poyntz, "she kept a great family." A note carefully preserved in the archives shows how motherly was her heart. Some devoted father left his daughter under her charge, and she wrote thus to one of her relatives:

"My dearest,—Give your noble cousin a thousand good-nights from me, tell him I was even anxious this evening to have had some fine garden flowers or such trifles to have recreated him with, and failing of all such commodities, I offered up to God my poor prayers for his health and happiness.

Beg him to be merry and look upon my grandchild's lock [of hair]. How I shall love his little daughter!"

Some say that people lose their affections when they become religious. This cannot be; the heart cannot spoil in the service of its Creator.

One day some distant relations came to see Mary, bringing with them Helena Catesby (grandniece of Robert Catesby, of Gunpowder Plot fame), a child of about nine years old. No sooner had she seen Mary than she cried out: "This is my mother, and I will never more leave her!" Persuasions were useless; nothing would induce the little one to go away. Fortunately for all parties, worn out with excitement and struggling, the child fell asleep. This propitious moment was seized, and Helena was carried unconscious from the house. No sooner, however, did she awake than she renewed her entreaties to return to "her mother"; nor did she give any one any peace until her request was granted and she was brought back. At eleven years of age she made a vow of chastity, and, after a life of exalted holiness as a member of the Institute, died at the age of seventy-one.

Another little visitor of about the same age was Elizabeth Rookwood, grand-daughter of the unfortunate Ambrose Rookwood, of Coldham Hall. Like Helena, she cried to stay with Mary Ward; like her, too, she made a vow of chastity, and, moreover, persuaded a young companion to do the same, saying "her beloved Jesus was worth more than a thousand worlds." But, unlike the little Catesby, this child was taken to her heavenly home at

fourteen, having pronounced the other two vows of religion on her death-bed.

There is no date to the following letter from Mary to her companions at Rome, but her biographers assign it to the year 1639 or 1640. It is written in lemon-juice on a round piece of paper, with measurements written in ink on the outside. If captured in the post, it was to look like a pattern of needlework. After bidding her children in Rome speak highly of Count Rosetti because of his excellent qualities and great kindness to her, she adds :

"Now to what above all imports, and the chief cause I write these. My meaning is to endeavour by prayer and private negotiation that we may have common schools in the great City of London, which will never be without a miracle, but all else will be to little purpose, the ungrateful nature of this people considered. Much might be said, which here I cannot say, but if so, some must come. Kate [probably Catherine Dawson] I have determined, think you who else. Tell my cousin, Elizabeth [Babthorpe] I mean. Think both, and from the hour you read these, commend the best success to God, and seek to provide [vestments], patterns of all that is good and rare, and can be had without too much cost, though money were well bestowed if one had it. . . . I fear of speaking all, but do you treat of all. . . . Let Kate perfect her Latin with all possible care, without loss of health, also to write Latin. Clara will yet be for this place, she hath no untoward aunts and other friends."

One short letter out of many written about this time to Pope Urban still remains, and shows on what a filial footing Mary stood with the Holy Father, and what strong, hopeful plans she was making for the future. In a "great glory" one day in prayer she caught a glimpse, like Moses, of a Promised Land. But, like Moses, she was to die in sight of it, not within it. Not until sixty years after her death the great desire of her heart was granted. Clement XI. in 1703 approved the Rules of an Institute which was the newly enrolled corps of her own disbanded regiment.

To the Holy Father she writes:

"How much greater consolation would it be to me to find myself now at your sacred feet, than here in my own country among my own relations! A severe illness of nearly three months, which still oppresses me, prevented me, much against my wish, from leaving this in the autumn. But in spring, ill or well, if God gives me life, I shall not fail to set off on my journey to Rome, where the presence and protection of my supreme Father and exalted Patron will make me truly happy. And one day at those sacred feet I trust some grace may be granted to me, which until now my sins have not made me worthy to obtain. Nevertheless, I will never abuse so much kindness by importuning for anything which does or might displease you. Most humbly entreating pardon for my present boldness, prostrate I kiss the sacred feet of your Holiness.

"MARIA DELLA GUARDIA.

"London, February 14, 1640."

Never again was that dauntless woman to set foot out of England. A few more years of patient suffering, of weary removals, of privation, and then the end would come. There was to be no apparent victory over her enemies, no great triumphs in this world. She was to close her eyes in an out-of-the-way part of England, without priest or Sacraments, with only a few of her most devoted children around her. Yet she would enjoy to the end that wonderful peace of soul and rest of mind which comes only from a conformity to the will of God such as hers.

Early in the year 1642 King Charles, having parted from the Queen, who was going to France on a secret embassy, left London and went North, drawing in his train the Royalists, and, consequently, the most influential Catholics. Left thus unprotected by her best friends, Mary determined to travel northward with her household, hoping, in the remote parts of Yorkshire, to be able still to keep a priest and help all about her to the consolations of religion.

It was the 1st of May, 1642, when three heavy, lumbering vehicles, filled with children, servants, and ladies, guarded by four men on horseback, and packed with luggage—which, if searched, might have cost the occupants their fortunes, if not their heads—set out at a slow pace from London towards Ripon, in Yorkshire, the neighbourhood of Mary's old homes. No record of this journey is left, but what it cost the little company would be hard to say. Probably many mansions on the way hospitably entertained the travellers, still the fatigue and anxiety must have been dreadful. One of the

horsemen was a priest in disguise, and the baggage contained "church stuff" in goodly quantities, Yet, through God's blessing, nothing untoward happened.

Enthusiastically joyous was the welcome given to Mary by her Yorkshire relations. There were her cousins at Ripley Castle and Studley Royal to visit; there was the old home at Newby, and the ancient house of the Babthorpes, where so many years of her youth had been spent. At Newby old servants gathered round her and her companions, and told tales of Mary's sweet childish ways, and showed them little gifts she had made them, which had been lovingly preserved among the treasures of their old age.

But who was the middle-aged man who accompanied her wherever she went—the man with iron-grey hair, in the dress of a servant, who was at every one's beck and call, who took upon himself the heaviest burdens and humblest offices? Robert Wright. Like Mary, he was in the midst of the scenes of his childhood, but he kept his name a secret, and passed by his home and kindred without recognition. The Wrights of Ploughland Hall were related to him, but in Mary's servant they saw no likeness to their lost relation.

After a few weeks spent in visits, Mary took up her abode at Hutton Rudby, an old house belonging to her cousins, the Inglebys. It was situated near Cleveland, a beautiful spot in Yorkshire, entirely secluded from the bustle of the world. Only a few poor families dwelt round about, Catholics most of them, men who remembered or who had heard tell of the grand Carthusian Monastery, once their pride and resource, but now,

with its noted pilgrimage of Mount Grace, a ruin. Even in Mary's days many a devoted Catholic stole up to offer a prayer to the Virgin Mother. "You will find Catholics praying there for hours together," Winefrid tells us. Once when Mary was ill her companions won her recovery from our Lady; and then she went herself to thank her good Mother.

Very peaceful and happy were the few months spent at Hutton Rudby. The pretty house-chapel, once more opened for the services of the church, was a real delight to the peasant folk. Once again they told their sins and received absolution; once again they knelt at the altar rails and heard Mass. They might have forgotten they lived in times of battle and persecution had it not been for distant rumours of moving regiments and bands of soldiers on the march.

One day, however, the sounds of strife drew nearer; the Parliamentarian army was approaching, it was said, within a mile or two, and forty fierce "dragoners" had been picked off to surround her house. "All, Mary excepted, were in great terror," says Winefrid, "on hearing one Saturday afternoon that they had arrived at the village near us. She called us all to our prayers"; but no assault was made that day. Early next morning one only "dragoner," the captain of the band, presented himself at the door and knocked civilly. He had heard it reported, he said, that there were trunks of gold hidden in the house, besides armour and other valuables. Being assured that such was by no means the case, he gave up the idea of a search, and quietly turned to go. With heartfelt gratitude the Sisters presented

him with twenty shillings. He took the money and departed, but, thinking the matter over on the road, returned and gave it back, saying that perhaps they had not given it him willingly; besides, they were in want of it themselves, and the soldiers would only drink it.

This visit, harmless though it proved, showed Mary what she might expect. And as she had no earthly army to prove a body-guard, she made a compact with the angel army of Heaven. Once a day the whole household was to assemble and say a *Pater* and ten *Aves* in honour of each choir, ending with the litanies of the Saints and Holy Angels. Never was the devotion omitted, and very wonderfully she and her household were preserved from injury and insult.

But Hutton Rudby had one great drawback as a place of residence in these sad times. It was with the greatest difficulty Mary could either send or receive letters, and she yearned to know how her companions in Rome and London were doing, and give them in return news of herself and her plans. At length her anxiety grew so great at the cessation of all tidings that, notwithstanding the danger which the neighbourhood of a town would occasion, she determined to move nearer to York. That city in 1644 was for a time the centre of warlike operations. In it numberless Royalists from the northern counties had congregated, determined to uphold the King to the last. That Mary was insensible of her danger no one can suppose, but, trusting to God's Providence she took the Manor House at Heworth, about half a mile from the city. There she established herself and her children, with our Lord in the Blessed Sacra-

ment as King over all. Rooms were fitted up for two priests, and a welcome given to as many more as might present themselves. Sometimes there were four or five in the house together.

At Heworth, as elsewhere, Mary's house became a place of resort. She was ageing now, and agonising suffering had wasted her frame; but there remained to the end of her life the bright, childlike manner, the sunny smile and joyous energy, which attracted the hearts of all who approached her.

The sight of these good souls so ready to receive the truth roused up all Mary's zeal, and she betook herself to God in prayer, telling Him of her plans of foundations, and begging Him for a certain sum of money she badly needed. Very distinctly, deep down in her heart, she heard the words: "Is this sum better than My Providence?" and with the words a great calm came into her soul. She felt the rest of leaning upon God and trusting for all things to His mercy and power.*

But not even at Heworth was there rest for Mary. The Royalists and Parliamentarians had met at Selby, and, the latter being victorious, marched on to York and besieged it. Mary was implored to flee from refuge into the city, but for a time she held out. "Fear not," she said; "we will have recourse to God and His Angels and Saints. They will help us. We will place St. Michael at one end of the village, and St. Joseph at the other, and oppose the power of the Sacred Name of Jesus to the great cannon and pieces, which will keep them from hurting." Her friends,

* Forty-seventh picture of the *Painted Life*.

however, supported by a less lively faith, failed to see the wisdom of her conduct, and begged her more earnestly than ever to come within the city walls.

In deference to their wishes, Mary at length complied, and broke up her household. Furniture, luggage, trunks, baggage of all kinds, had to be carried singly by one or other of her party through the gate into the city, for no carts were allowed to pass. The soldiers on guard made a point of despoiling all who entered, but Mary's children and goods passed through unharmed.

For six weeks the siege lasted. Five hundred cannon-balls fell into the city; one struck the roof of Mary's house, but glanced off a broken tile and fell unharming below. Mary suffered fearfully. Want of air, of quiet, and of proper food told upon her strength. Yet visitors came as usual, only in greater numbers and in greater need of help, and they were welcomed with the usual bright smile and strong word of comfort. "They went to her as dead and lost, full of fears and alarms, but with her they revived, and went away equally filled with courage," writes Winefrid.

One day, when the siege was at its height, a companion of hers asked her what would become of them all. With absolute confidence Mary answered: "I am certain God will protect me and mine wherever we are." Another time, the same low-spirited individual, trying to be cheerful, said: "We must be content." "Oh, don't say we *must*," Mary answered; "say we *will*."

As soon as circumstances permitted after the siege was raised, Mary returned once more to the Manor House. But what a sight met her eyes!—

the beautiful garden trampled into a wilderness, the pine trees cut down, the house almost a ruin, with the lead and iron from roof and doors torn off. Four hundred soldiers, besides many wounded, had been quartered in the rooms; the dead had been hastily buried in the garden. Altogether, the sights, the smells, and the desolation were enough to turn any heart sick. Mary, however, was noticed to be particularly joyful and content, and Winefrid could only remark "that her satisfaction was above all sense." Two rooms only were untouched, as neat and clean as when left—the chapel and Mary's room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Put off . . . the garment of thy mourning and affliction, and put on the beauty and honour of that everlasting glory which thou hast from God."—*Baruch* v. 1.

"I have much to do not to beg our Lord to take me," Mary said, with a smile, one day in the autumn of 1645. But He was going to take her without being asked, and that soon. Only a few more months of suffering and exile, and then—Home and rest for all eternity!

From the Feast of St. Anne, July 26th, to the Feast of All Saints, November 1st, no priest entered the house. The Parliamentarians kept continual watch upon the movements of Catholics. We hear of four searches taking place in the same house within twenty-four hours. To be without the consolations of religion for so long a time was a great deprivation for Mary, who had communicated daily for many years. Another trial was the loss of letters. No news from Rome, none from London, where a few of her children still remained. At last, after much prayer, she told her sisters of her trouble, and immediately Winefrid Wigmore offered to go herself to London and take and bring back letters. Few acts of friendship have been more heroic than this of Winefrid. Even her very love for Mary might have pleaded an excuse. She was in her sixtieth year; the journey had to be made on foot, and two contending armies to be passed; still, the brave, loving heart never faltered. She set out with the

secret fear of never seeing her friend and mother again. Mary Poyntz tells us of these last months of Mary's life: "When she saw me anxious about Winefrid, she would say, 'Do not fear she will come safe.' At other times she would seem to follow the movements of her absent friend. 'Now she is here,' 'Now she is there,' she would exclaim. 'On such a day she will be at home, in time to bury me,' which in fact happened." "*To bury me*"! The words sounded like a knell in the listener's ear.

When Christmas came round one daring priest managed to evade the vigilance of the spies and say his three Masses in Mary's house. She was present, and was overjoyed to see around her the poor persecuted Catholics of the neighbourhood. Again in Christmas week the priest said Mass, but left immediately after.

On the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, towards evening, Mary was seized with sharp pains and deadly cold. She went to the chapel, saying on the way: "This is something more than ordinary. I will go and offer myself to our dear Lord in the chapel." She then took to her bed, never to leave it again. On New Year's Day she made her general confession and received Holy Communion for the last time. The priest was to leave early next morning. Feeling very ill, she begged him to give her the Holy Oils. Not realising how near her end was, he refused, saying, brightly, he was in greater danger of death than she. Mary made no answer, but as the door closed behind him she exclaimed: "Patience, I must not have that happiness, for I know well there will be no means hereafter." She was right. For

her there was to be no more Mass or communion, no anointing, no last blessing. All that, like our Lord's anointing, had been done beforehand. But what pained her more even than the loss of the Sacraments was the apparent apathy that came over her soul. "That nothing may be wanting to my pains," she said to Mary Poyntz, "I do not only not make my daily communions, but I have not even the satisfaction of thinking that I feel the want of that great grace, as if I did not esteem it as I have done."

About the 26th of January Winefrid returned home, bringing with her news from London, but none from Rome. This was Mary's last disappointment. From that time she failed fast. A few days later she asked for the Sacraments. This request seems to have broken down the last hopes of her companions, and they did not attempt to conceal their sorrow. But not even round her deathbed would Mary let them grieve. Gathering them about her, she sat up, and spoke bright, consoling words, telling them again and again of God's goodness, of His loving Providence, reminding them of His boundless charity towards them in particular. But still their tears would fall, and choking sobs stifle their words.

"O fie, fie! What! still look sad!" she said. "Come, let us rather sing and praise God joyfully for all His infinite lovingkindness!" She sang the hymn they often had sung together, and they, stifling their sorrow as best they might, joined their voices with hers. Gradually the sweet notes died away, hushed in weariness, and she lay calm and peaceful to rest. Twenty-four hours afterwards Mary died.

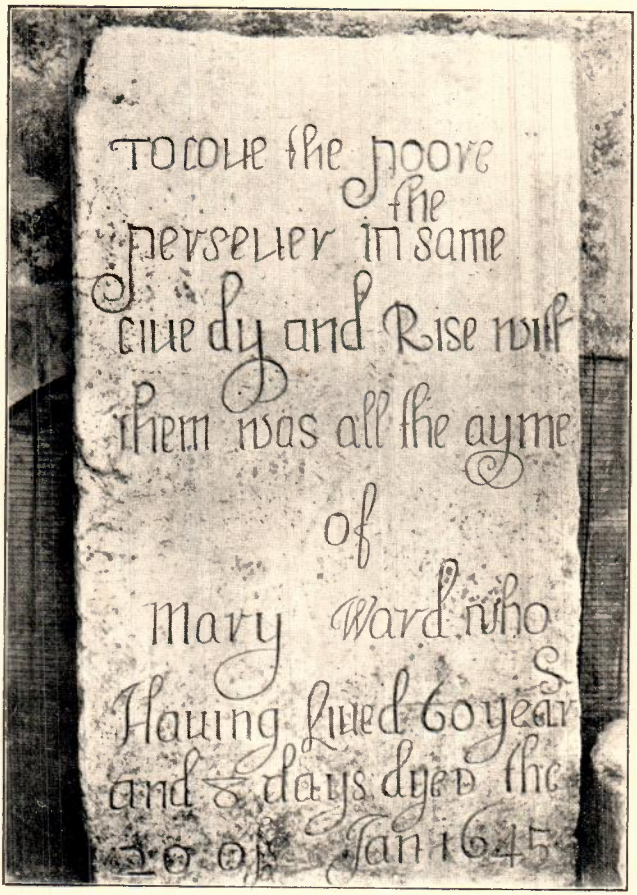
In a long account to Winefrid Bedingfield, Mary Poyntz gives many details of "that bitter night." She had the full use of her senses up to the last; her understanding was unclouded, her memory perfect. About seven o'clock she desired all to be present. Winefrid said: "We are all here." "I would you were all," she answered. One little thing troubled her peace: she had put off asking for a priest for fear of paining her children. They were to beg pardon of God, she said, for this weakness of hers. She recommended them to cherish "God's vocation" in them. "Let it be constant, efficacious, and *loving*," she said, with a great stress on the word "loving." Pitying their desolate condition, she added later, "God will assist you; it is no matter the who, but the what; and when God shall enable me to be in place, I will serve you." As the night advanced a great agony came on, but in the intervals she prayed unceasingly; her eyes beamed, her face was lit up with heavenly joy. When morning dawned she drew each Sister into her arms and kissed her tenderly. "Then seemed to mind us no more, but with eyes and hands gave sign of sweet entire acts," says Mary Poyntz. She kissed the crucifix she held in her hand, pronounced the name of Jesus three times, then, without a sigh or a groan bowed, her head in death.

As those loving, faithful few watched around the bed of death, they saw a life-like look of beauty return to the loved face: the lips were red as in life; forehead, hands, and arms marked with deep blue veins. She "was kept," Mary Poyntz tells us, "from Monday to Wednesday, and the last more lovely than the first." Then came the hour of parting,

sadder far by reason of the perilous times. "We had not what to buy for her burial, had not Winefrid brought it," says poor Mary Poyntz. Wrapped in cere-cloth and placed in a wooden coffin, Mary was buried in the little churchyard of Osbaldwick. Not without great difficulty had even this humble grave been procured. Often enough a place of rest even after death was denied to Catholics. But, says her biographer, "we found out a little churchyard where the minister was honest enough to be bribed." On the eastern side of the church of Osbaldwick, right against the side of the church, with the head towards the porch, Mary's coffin was laid. No priest read the beautiful prayers for the dead over those holy remains; no holy water was sprinkled, no panegyric preached. But from the crowd of Protestants and Catholics who had followed her to the grave, the cry went up: "There never was such a woman; no, never!"—rough testimony from simple folk, with a signification deeper than they knew.

The flat grave-stone, chiselled by an unskilled hand, stands now propped up against the church wall. The lettering is distinct, and the inscription shows by its wording how careful her friends had been not to reveal the faith of her who lay beneath.

"When the leaves were turning, shining beautiful, the ladies at the Bar had their wont to go to Osbaldwick and pray at the grave of Mrs. Mary Ward, their first Lady Abbess," says an old document. "The ladies at the Bar" were Mary Ward's children of a later generation, who more than 200 years ago settled in York, near Mickle-



Mary Ward's Tombstone in Osbaldwick Cemetery, York.

gate Bar, and, like Mary, in defiance of wicked laws, lived as Religious, and instructed the children of rich and poor in the big house outside the city walls.*

But was Mary's body still lying in the little grave at Osbaldwick when these ladies visited it? Or did Mary Poyntz and Winefrid Wigmore, who treasured up as precious heirlooms every little article of their Mother's wear, take it with them when, a few years after her death, they went to Paris? We do not know. In a letter from York, 1727, to Mary Cramlington, a Religious of the Institute, it is said that "many years ago, the nuns at York had the grave opened, and nothing was found in it but the copper or tin plate upon which Mary Ward's name was engraved." We cannot at present get access to the grave, and it keeps its secret still. But "the ladies at the Bar" still go to pray where Mary Ward once lay, and ask through her intercession for the grace of their vocation—strong, efficacious, and *loving*.

The first word on Mary's baby lips was the name of Jesus. When death came that holy name was the last to linger there. And between cradle and death-bed it was her watchword, her consolation, her strength, and her hope. All her letters end with the holy Name. To the care of Jesus her dear ones are confided: "Jesus ever keep you!" "Jesus be with you!" "Our Lord Jesus be with you ever and all!" "Our Lord Jesus bless and direct you!"

When only a child Mary recognised the divine beauty of her Saviour. "I saw there was no one

* See "Annals of St. Mary's Convent," York.

to compare with Him." And love followed admiration. She took Him for her Spouse, and resolutely sought to please Him by becoming like Him. This was not so easy a task as the story of her life might lead us to imagine. We see victories, and forget the fight that went before.

Mary had to fight for the victory, as all God's servants have fought. Her strong natural character had to be taken in hand, trained, softened. By nature she was religiously inclined, affectionate, fearless, generous, energetic, modest. But she was also proud, prone to anger, impetuous, strong-willed. Here was material to make a saint or mar one. As we follow her life, written by her own hand, or by an eye-witness, we are fascinated by the quick yet gradual progress her beautiful soul is making. She seemed to work hand in hand with our Lord. He showed her her faults, and the way to correct them ; and when her own little remedies were not sufficient, He added others till the fault was cured.

To cure her pride of family she swept the passages at Babthorpe Hall. And He led her into the streets of St. Omer to beg for food and drink. To cure her impetuosity she made a vow of obedience to her confessor, and He allowed that confessor to oppose her holiest designs. She controlled her anger by forcing herself to listen patiently to abuse and to answer her accusers with gentle courtesy. And He allowed her to have enemies and accusers without number, and taught her to excuse and love them and pray for them with such charity that it was thought more profitable to be her enemy than her friend. Her strong will and energy she brought under control by asking

advice and submitting to guidance. And He laid her prostrate on a bed of suffering with an agonising disease. The affections of her loving heart she directed aright by turning them like a strong tide upon God, and the reflux only upon creatures. And He allowed those creatures, children of the household, to bring such sorrow upon her that she could say with David: "They repaid me evil for good, and hatred for my love."*

Thus little by little Mary's natural character became elevated and supernaturalised. To this end one virtue—conformity to the will of God—helped more than any other. Without this conformity in an eminent degree, she could not have been so moulded by the Divine hand. Every blow that came was recognised as His; every grace, or light, or joy, was His; every disgrace, darkness, desolation, was His. She spoke of her prison as "my palace," because she was there by His will; her enemies were her "good friends," because they were doing His work in her soul; her poverty was pleasing to her: "He is pleased with these our straits, and so are we also," she writes at a time when the next meal was not secured. "I will not have you troubled at what you cannot help, and what in likelihood our Lord and love permits for the best."

But to recapitulate all her loving expressions about the sweet will of God would be to rewrite her life. And yet one word must be said of another fruit it brought her—the peace, joyousness, gaiety even, for which she was remarkable. She was joyous not by fits and starts—in time of

* Ps. ciii.

consolation, when any one may smile—but in physical suffering, in want and misery, in disgrace and shame. "Be merry," she says in her letters. "In these times mirth is next to grace." There were three things she loved to see, she used to say—"young people devout, old people patient, sick people *joyous*." From her prison she laughed at her children for their tears, and bade them sing joyfully every day whilst she was away. And singing joyfully and praising God, she prepared herself and them for their final parting.